



# DOWNTOWN BERKLEY

## *Master Plan*

BERKLEY, MICHIGAN  
DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY

## STATE OF THE DOWNTOWN

Adopted

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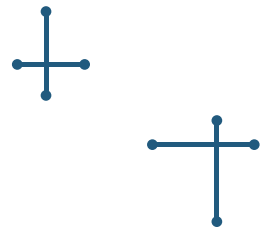
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# *Chapter 1* INTRODUCTION



**Berkley, Michigan has a downtown district that many small cities would envy. Its main corridors, Twelve Mile Road and Coolidge Highway, are home to over 50 independent retailers—an eclectic mix of shops and boutiques that challenge the concept that “retail is dead.” Festivals such as CruiseFest, Art Bash, Berkley Street Art Fest, and Ladies Night Out—add to Downtown Berkley’s conviviality, bringing residents and visitors to Downtown throughout the year.**

**This lively and welcoming place evokes a sense of the past, with a history and character that beckon to the golden age—both of suburban cities and of the Detroit area. This charming, mid-century aesthetic is what sets it apart from neighboring communities and retail districts—and what makes it poised for a renaissance.**

# *OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES*

## OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown Berkley holds and enormous amount of potential. The small town feel that gives Downtown so much character can be found in the friendly business owners who get to know their customers and are engaged in planning processes to build a better Downtown Berkley. Long-time, as well as emerging Berkley businesses provide a strong base to build on and provide additional complementary services. The small storefronts that make up Downtown offer opportunities for start-ups—the type of independent businesses the community hopes to see.

While the Downtown has not seen high levels of new construction to date, several key sites are well-positioned for new development that could bring residential and commercial uses to the area—bolstering the existing business base.

Physical enhancements to the Downtown have the opportunity to create new places and experiences that will continue to define Downtown Berkley.

The growth of nearby communities such as Ferndale and Royal Oak have brought more attention to Berkley—both from developers and young families looking for attractive housing and a walkable downtown. With its exemplary school district and family-friendly vibe, Downtown Berkley is well positioned for future growth. The key will be to guide these opportunities in a manner that represents the vision Berkley residents, business owners, and City and DDA leadership have for their community.





***“I am excited about the future of Berkley—I believe it will grow and prosper. It just needs some updating.”***

*Comment from Online Survey*

## CHALLENGES

Downtown Berkley is not without its challenges. Downtown’s “L” shape makes it difficult to walk from one end to the other in a single trip. Nodes of activity occur on both Twelve Mile and Coolidge, but feel disconnected from each other—both due to their distance and the absence of a consistent streetscape. Berkley’s constrained development patterns make growth difficult. At the same time, growth in surrounding communities attract Berkley residents on weekends and evenings. While Downtown’s vibrant mix of businesses range from art studios to gaming spaces, an overwhelming number of beauty salons, fitness studios, and pizza parlors leave the impression there is a lack of business diversity.

Traffic speeds on both 12 Mile and Coolidge make the pedestrian experience rather challenging—despite the fact that the Downtown area is quite walkable. The condition of many sidewalks and the lack of marked crosswalks at key intersections create the perception that walking around Downtown Berkley is not safe.

The absence of a public gathering space Downtown also adds to the sense that the Downtown is missing a destination—a place for people to come together, and bring their families for community events and other activities. Past attempts to create this public space never gained consensus, instilling doubt in many residents and business owners that their voices truly matter in planning processes. There are perceptions that Berkley residents are hesitant to accept change in the Downtown, causing some to fear that change is happening too quickly. Local conversation around proposed changes in Downtown Berkley has caused some consternation among residents, making it more challenging to coalesce around a common downtown vision.

One thing is certain—Berkley residents and business owners are passionate and engaged in defining the future of Downtown Berkley.



# *PLAN MISSION, PROCESS & TIMELINE*

## PLAN MISSION

The goal of this Downtown Master Plan is to serve as a guiding document for Downtown Berkley—a blueprint that positions the district for growth that maintains the authentic character that makes Downtown Berkley unique. Through an extensive public input process, the Master Plan will serve as a community-backed vision for the future of Downtown, enabling the Downtown Development Authority and the City of Berkley to advance projects and decisions that align with Master Plan objectives. The Final Master Plan will identify priority investments and outline the steps necessary to achieve plan initiatives, investments, and implementation action steps.

## PLAN PROCESS

In 2018, the Berkley Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and its Board of Directors embarked on the creation of a new Downtown Master Plan, an important policy document that will guide future investment and development activity within the DDA district. The Lakota Group, a Chicago-based planning and urban design firm, was engaged by the DDA to lead the development of the plan, along with economic development consultant, CLUE Group, and transportation consultant, Sam Schwartz LLC. A Task Force of DDA board members, DDA volunteers, City Council members, City staff, and area residents was assembled to help guide the planning process.

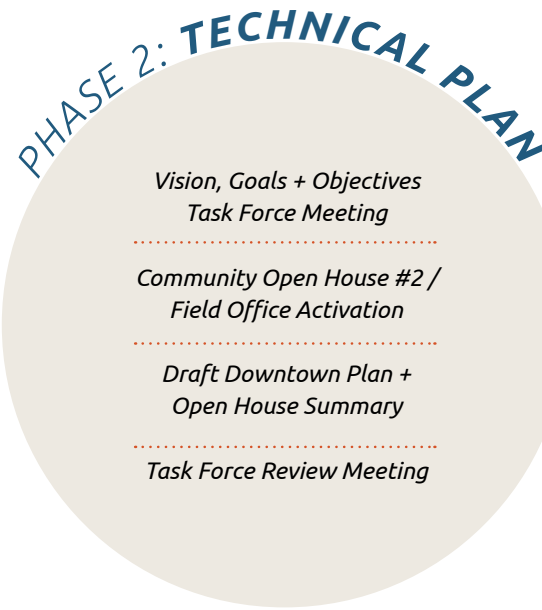
The Downtown Master Plan process was designed to maximize opportunities for community input, with various check points to gather ideas and feedback. The planning process is organized into three phases: Public Visioning, Technical Plan, Final Plan and Adoption. The following page outlines the tasks involved in each phase, as well as the associated timeline.





SEPTEMBER 2018 - JANUARY 2019

The first phase establishes a dynamic community planning process and creates a comprehensive information base through which to understand the existing conditions in Downtown Berkley.



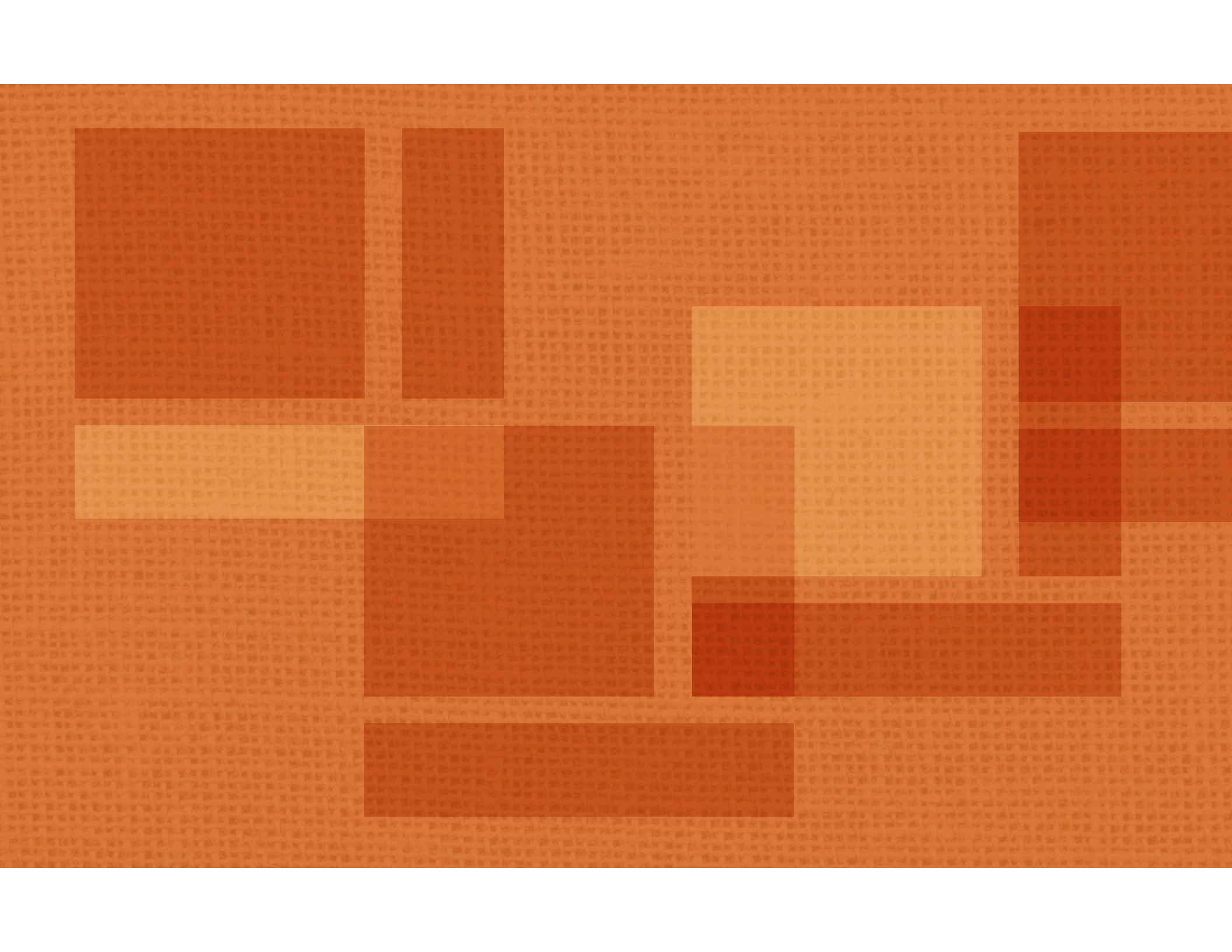
JANUARY - MARCH 2019

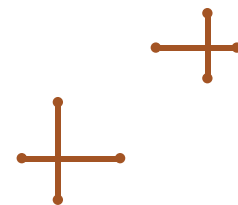
During the second phase, the vision and goals of the plan are outlined, and concepts and recommendations for physical enhancements and placemaking, transportation improvements, and business development will be crafted and ultimately formalized into a draft Downtown Plan.



MARCH - MAY 2019

In the third and final phase, the Downtown Plan will go through a series of revisions before it is ultimately adopted by the City and the DDA.





## *Chapter 2* **DOWNTOWN CONTEXT**



# HISTORIC CONTEXT

The land which now incorporates Downtown Berkley, Michigan was part of a vast forest which thrived in the area's shallow natural lakes, swamps, and wetlands created during a much earlier period of glaciation. Early documented human habitation in the Berkley area included the Ottawa, Chippewa and Pottawatomie Native-American tribes which used present-day Roseland Park Cemetery land for planting squash and harvesting corn during their migrations along the well-traveled Saginaw Trail, today's Woodward Avenue.

## FROM SWAMPLAND TO FARMLAND

In 1825, the Erie Canal to the Great Lakes was opened, and floods of new settlers arrived in the Detroit area to try their hand at farming the 80-acre plots made available by the Detroit land office. Some of these early settlers traveled up the military plank road—today's Woodward Avenue—until reaching taverns located at Eleven Mile Road on the west side of Woodward, near present day Berkley. Most of the region would remain farmland into the 1850s, including Berkley where several dairy farms were established.

## EARLY BERKLEY DEVELOPMENT

### *Late 1800s to 1920s*

The discovery of iron ore deposits in Michigan's Upper Peninsula during the late 1800s helped start the industrial transformation of Detroit – leading to the production of railroad cars, stoves, and later, the automobile. During the late 1890s, a streetcar line was constructed between Pontiac and Detroit along Woodward Avenue, setting the stage for the transformation of Berkley from a rural farming enclave to a small town with local businesses supporting the prospering industries of Detroit and Pontiac. By the early 1900s, with Ford in Detroit, the Oakland Motor Car Company (later a division of General Motors in Pontiac) and several smaller automotive operations and support industries popping up, the region was quickly becoming the nation's center for auto manufacturing.

During this period and after the first World War, Detroit experienced a rising cost of living and severe housing shortages – leading to the first migration of Detroit residents from the city to the inner ring suburbs, where the cost of living was lower. Berkley was advertised in Detroit as a location to escape the congestion and live affordably. The Woodward Avenue streetcar line and access to personal automobiles allowed the working class to live further from



*12 Mile and Woodward, 1902 (Berkley Historical Museum)*



*Coolidge 1926 (Berkley Historical Museum)*



*Berkley Water Tower, Undated (Berkley Historical Museum)*

their workplace, in new, affordable single-family housing. Berkley's earliest residential neighborhoods from this period would be platted and built south of Twelve Mile Road and north of Catalpa Drive between Tyler and Henley. Downtown's first generation of commercial buildings would also be constructed during this period, including a two-story block with upper-story housing and office units. To incentivize growth, Berkley installed electric lights in 1919 and began construction on a new school located north of Catalpa Drive on Berkley Avenue. As farms continued to be sold for residential developments, Berkley's citizens sought to formally incorporate the land.

By 1923, Berkley received its charter as a village. Two factions of Berkley citizens, each with rival visions for Berkley's future, sought to incorporate the village first. One group wanted the village to grow along Woodward Avenue, the other preferred to be located off the thoroughfare, preserving Berkley's small-town character. The latter won, and hence, the location of Downtown Berkley was determined.

By 1927 Berkley would grow to an estimated 5,000 citizens, install modern sewers, water mains, and sidewalks, and pave many of its streets, transitioning the community into a contemporary Village with a vibrant commercial district along Twelve Mile Road, and later along Coolidge Highway. By the 1940s, Coolidge and 12 Mile would become the commercial and entertainment center for Berkley, as evidenced by the construction of the Berkley Theater in 1939. When Berkley incorporated as a City in 1932, the Great Depression had left an estimated 90 percent of its residents unemployed. As a result, tax revenues plummeted leaving the City unable to operate its street lights and other public services. It would take the onset of World War II and the suburban boom years of the 1950s and 1960s to bring renewed prosperity to Berkley and its Downtown.





*12 Mile Road, 1948 (Berkley Historical Museum)*



*Inspecting New 1953 Fire Truck (Berkley Historical Museum)*

## WORLD WAR II & BERKLEY'S REVIVAL

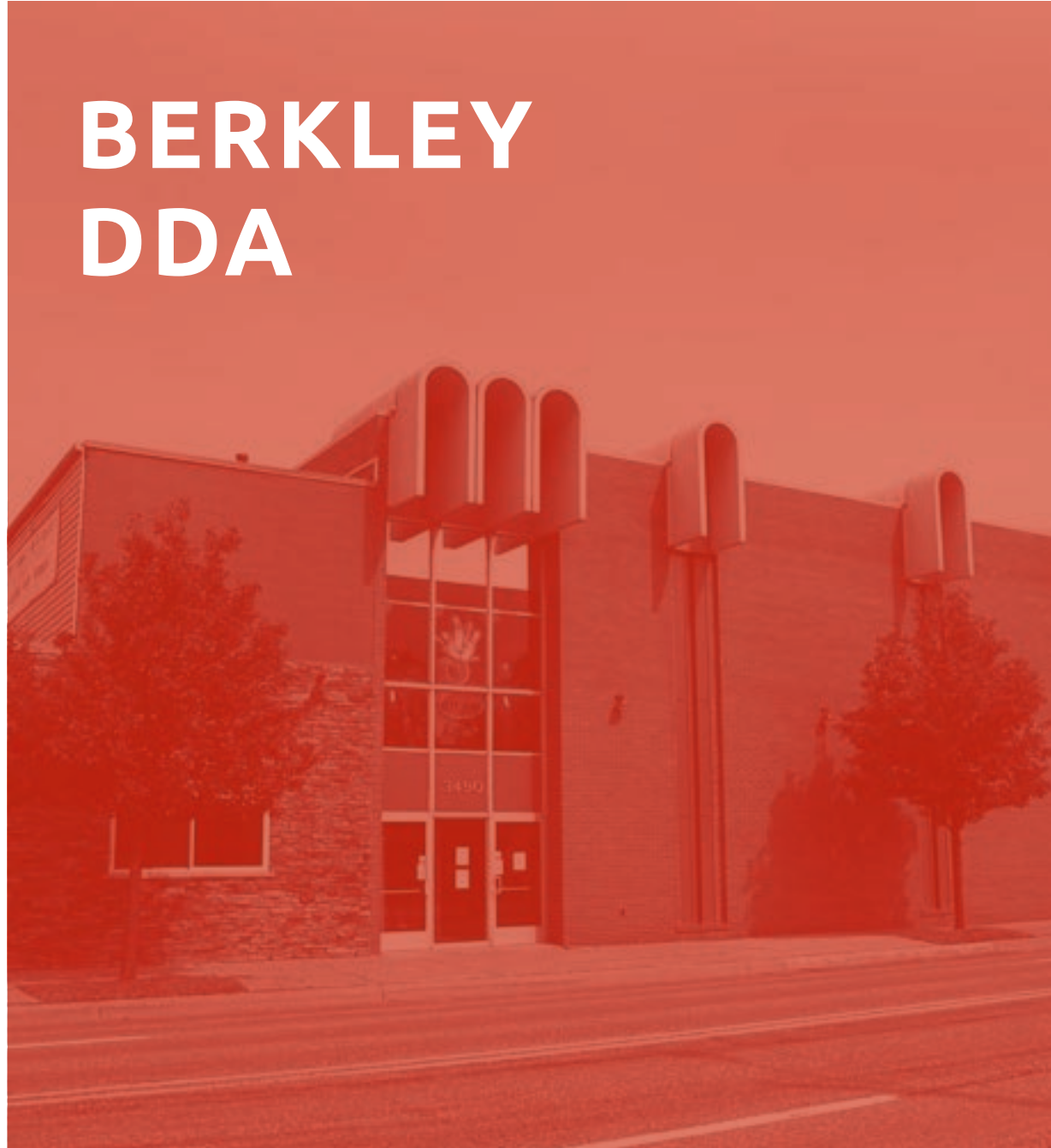
During World War II, Detroit's auto manufacturing complex transitioned to war time production, creating a need for employees to meet the demand for armaments. As manufacturing facilities expanded into Oakland County, Berkley became a destination for the construction of war-time housing to accommodate the workers moving to the region. In 1947, after World War II, wartime housing regulations and rent controls were largely repealed, leading to an additional increase in new builds in Berkley as returning veterans and their families looked for new opportunities in the growing economy of Detroit's suburbs.

The period between 1940 and 1950 would see Berkley's population increase from 6,400 inhabitants to nearly 18,000. The population would peak in the 1960s with over 23,000 residents, marking a time when Berkley was predominantly built-out with limited growth potential. Downtown Berkley would continue to develop with the addition of new one-story "Mid-Century" vernacular commercial buildings and a new generation of businesses and retailers serving the greater Berkley community. By the late 1960s and early 70s, Downtown Berkley, like many traditional commercial districts around the country, would experience new challenges in competing with the regional shopping malls and later strip centers developing in the Oakland County region.

# BERKLEY DDA

Authorized under state law, the Berkley Downtown Development Authority is a downtown management and improvement entity funded through Tax Increment Finance (TIF) and a limited millage levy.

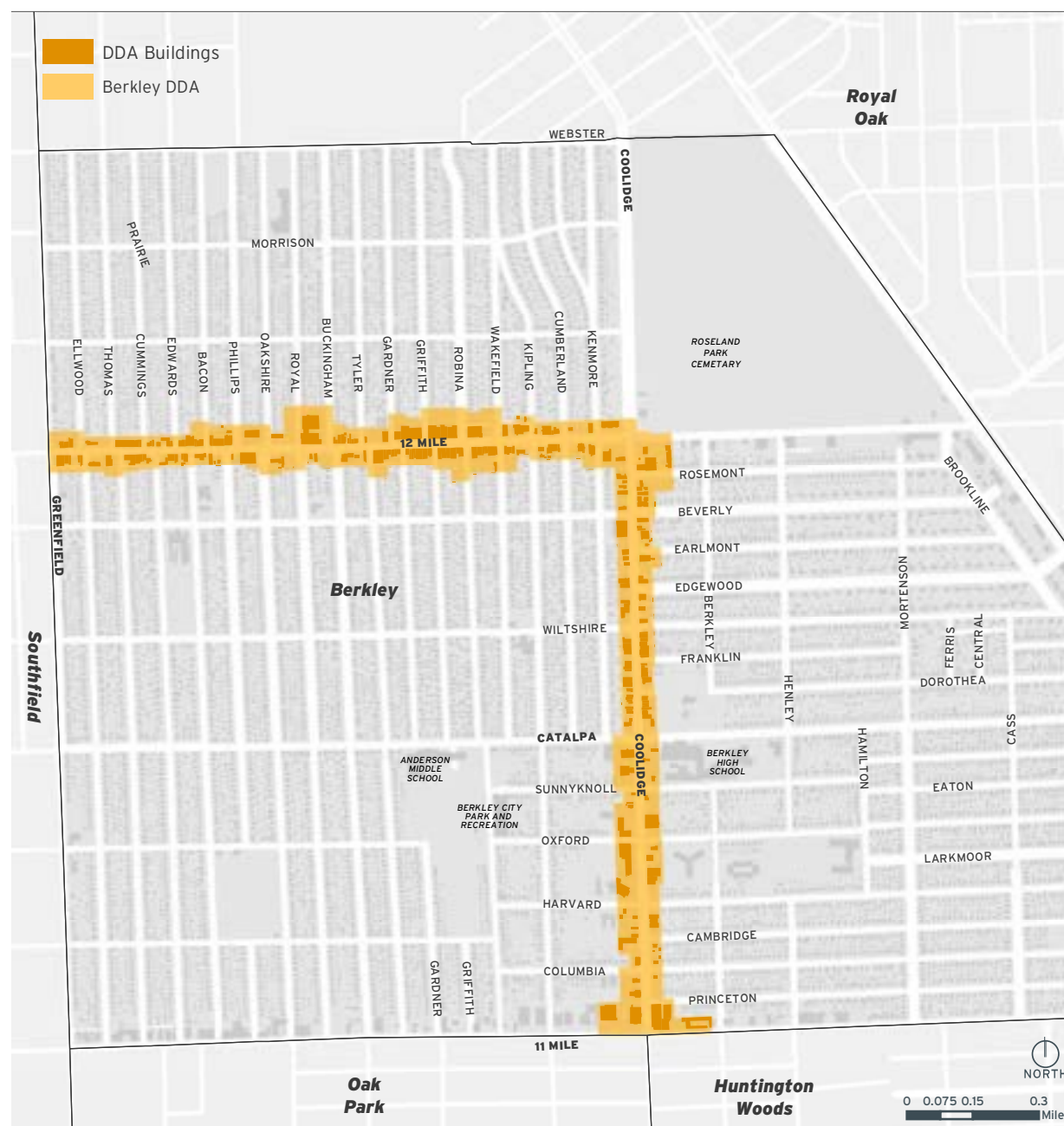
The DDA is governed by a 13-member Board of Directors comprised of Downtown Berkley business and property owners and at large members, which are appointed by the City Manager and approved by the Berkley City Council. The City Manager also currently sits on the board. The DDA's only full-time staff is its Executive Director.



## DDA BOUNDARIES

The Berkley DDA boundaries include Twelve Mile Road from Greenfield Road to the west and Coolidge Highway to the east, as well as Coolidge from Twelve Mile Road to the north to Eleven Mile Road to the south. These boundaries coincide with the boundaries of the TIF District, which supports projects for downtown revitalization, commercial development, and other infrastructure enhancements within the DDA.

FIGURE 1: Berkley DDA Boundaries





## DDA OPERATIONS

By statute, the DDA operates semi-autonomously from city government, allowing the DDA to lead initiatives that a municipality typically would not directly undertake, such as producing special events or publishing business directories. The DDA runs a range of business-oriented programs, including:

- Storefront façade improvement grant
- Business directories and maps
- Market analysis and business data
- Buy-local promotions
- Cooperative advertising, including radio ad-buys and a four-page color insert in newspapers distributed to 88,000 trade-area households.

In 2018, the DDA offered direct assistance to businesses from a nationally recognized retail business consultant. The assistance focused on multi-channel marketing and offered a free workshop to business owners along with in-store consultations.

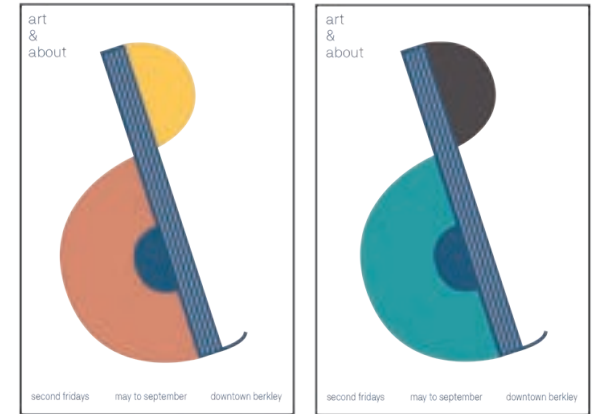
In addition, the DDA leads a series of annual events:

- **Ladies Night Out:** A retail event held three times per year
- **Merrimonth:** A string of December events including shopping incentives, a shopping night, musical performances, Santa visits, a window display contest, and more
- **Art and About:** A series of visual and performance art events during the summer months

The DDA also manages initiatives to enhance Downtown Berkley's physical environment (in addition to the façade grant), including:

- Public art and mural programs
- Wayfinding signs
- Planning and parking studies
- Design guidelines for building improvements

Additional information regarding many of these initiatives are outlined on page 16.





DDA programs and priorities are established by its Board of Directors, in consultation with the Executive Director. Because the DDA operates semi-autonomously from the City, the City Manager and the City Council do not directly manage the DDA's agenda, although the City Manager participates as a board member and the City Council is regularly updated. As in many cities with DDAs or other independent revitalization organizations, this arrangement offers the advantage of being able to lead projects that city government cannot.



The DDA is a participant in the Main Street Oakland County program and is currently designated as one of their "Select Communities". In 2019, the DDA intends to become a "Certified Main Street Program", a designation offered through the National Main Street Center and Main Street Oakland County. Main Street is a historic preservation based economic development program for traditional commercial districts, developed by the National Trust for historic preservation and the National Main Street Center in 1980.

# PLANNING CONTEXT

AUGUST 2017



In the past two years, the Berkley DDA and the City have been proactive in addressing the needs of the Downtown district. Many of the planning processes conducted to date have included public outreach, which has led to some confusion among Berkley residents and business owners as to how these planning efforts converge and diverge. The following pages give a brief overview of what has been accomplished to date, what is coming in the future, and how they all help to make Downtown Berkley great.

## DDA STRATEGIC PLAN

The Berkley DDA worked with The Lakota Group in August of 2017 to develop the DDA's first *Strategic Plan*. The Plan represents a new set of goals and actions to guide the organization's revitalization efforts along Twelve Mile Road and Coolidge Highway. Coming at a time of change for the DDA, with a new Executive Director and an interest in participating in the Main Street Oakland County program, the plan set forth a clear agenda for the DDA and an understanding on how the organization should position itself in the transition to a DDA-based Main Street revitalization program.



SUMMER 2017

MARCH 2017



## WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

The DDA and the City of Berkley worked with Corbin Design to develop a *Comprehensive Wayfinding System* for the DDA district and the City of Berkley. The design concepts highlighted to the left reflect the signs that will eventually be placed around Downtown Berkley to communicate to residents and visitors how to navigate the Downtown, find parking, and locate destinations outside of the Downtown.

These signs have been approved by the DDA and the City and will be fabricated and installed in 2019.

## DOWNTOWN MARKET ANALYSIS

In March of 2017, the DDA worked with MJB Consulting to develop a *Retail Positioning Strategy* for Downtown Berkley. The study outlines a market position for Downtown Berkley, describes tenant characteristics and needs, and offers guidance on how existing merchants could take advantage of market opportunities.

Highlights from this study are summarized on page 32.

MARCH 2018

JUNE 2018

## COMPLETE STREETS ORDINANCE

The City of Berkley adopted its *Complete Streets Ordinance* in March of 2018. The ordinance provides a framework to ensure that future transportation initiatives are safe for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Complete Streets utilize tools such as curb enhancements, bike lanes, improved signage and pedestrian crossings to make cities more walkable and enjoyable for people of all ages using all modes of transportation. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act requires all municipalities to address Complete Streets in a community's Master Plan (Comprehensive Plan).

Read more about this ordinance on page 46.

## DDA DESIGN GUIDELINES

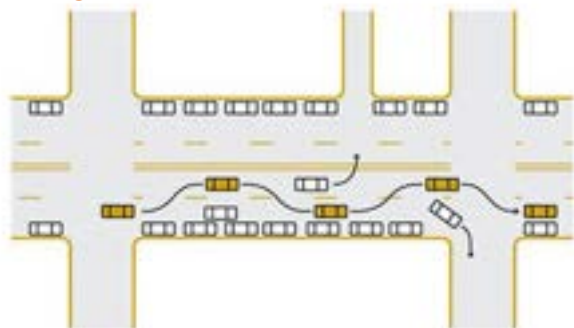
The Berkley DDA worked with consulting firm Winter & Company to develop a set of *Design Guidelines* for the Downtown, which were finalized in June of 2018. The guidelines set design standards for new development and renovations in the Downtown district, with the goal of enhancing the district's image while reinforcing the qualities that make it unique. Community input helped to form the final guidelines document, ensuring the community's design expectations are clear to potential developers.



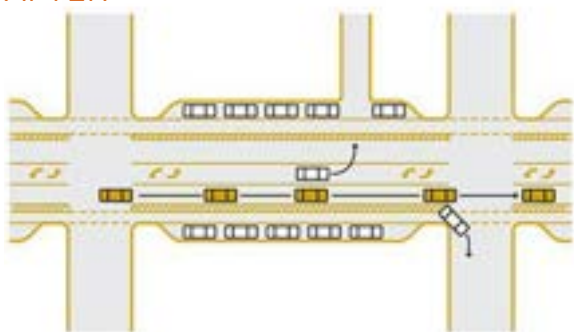
ONGOING

WINTER/SPRING 2019

BEFORE



AFTER



## COOLIDGE HIGHWAY ROAD DIET

The City of Berkley and the DDA have been working with engineering firms Spalding DeDecker and HRC to assess the feasibility of a lane reduction on Coolidge with the goal of slowing traffic, increasing safety, and spurring economic development.

On Monday, January 7, 2019 the City Council approved a Resolution of Support for a 24 month trial lane reconfiguration for Coolidge Highway between Eleven Mile and Twelve Mile Road. The new configuration will use paint to reduce the lanes of travel to one in each direction, create a dedicated center turning lane, expand parking, and add bike lanes. The diagram to the left outlines these changes.

## FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS

Additional planning initiatives that will impact Downtown Berkley are already in the works. A multi-community planning process is set to begin in early 2019, which will coordinate transportation improvements and sustainable infrastructure improvements between Berkley, Huntington Woods, and Oak Park.

In the spring of 2019, the City is set to announce the process to update Berkley's Comprehensive Plan, which will include long-range planning at a city-wide level. The goals and recommendations from the Downtown Master Plan will be incorporated as a part of the city-wide Comprehensive Plan.



# DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

The following section—**Downtown Context**—provides a snapshot of Downtown Berkley's existing conditions, including land use and urban design, zoning, catalytic sites and development opportunities, business and market conditions, and parking and transportation conditions.



# LAND USE & URBAN DESIGN CONDITIONS

## LAND USE

Downtown Berkley is largely characterized by one to two-story traditional commercial buildings constructed from its earliest development period during the early decades of the 20th century to the 1950s and 60s as the Downtown maintained its position as a major shopping and commercial center for Berkley and neighboring communities.

Given this development time frame, Downtown Berkley is typical of urban commercial corridors found in metropolitan regions where commercial development occurred within walking distance to adjacent residential neighborhoods and storefronts were oriented to the pedestrian.

Apart from its commercial development, Downtown Berkley has three main civic uses—the City Hall complex at Coolidge and Rosemont Road, the Berkley Public Library at Coolidge Highway and Beverly Boulevard, and the U.S. Post Office at Twelve Mile and Wakefield Roads. Three religious institutions are located within the DDA District—Our Lady of La Salette at Coolidge and Harvard Road, the Church of the King at Twelve Mile Road and Phillips Avenue, and the Berkley First United Methodist Church at Twelve Mile and Kipling Avenue.

Although not within the DDA District boundary, the Berkley High School complex, just east of Coolidge at Catalpa Drive, is a significant institutional anchor, with an enrollment of 1,200 students on an open campus. Surrounding the DDA District are mostly single-family neighborhoods constructed before and after World War II, with the exception of the Oxford Park Tower, a senior housing apartment complex located east of Coolidge between Oxford and Harvard Roads.



**FIGURE 2: Land Use and Character Areas in the DDA**



## CHARACTER AREAS

In addition to its land use development pattern, Downtown Berkeley can also be defined by specific character areas—distinct nodes along Coolidge and Twelve Mile that share common building types and architectural characteristics, site features, and streetscape and urban design conditions. Specific nodes may also present opportunities for new development.

Downtown Berkeley character areas were first identified in the *2017 Downtown Berkeley Strategic Plan* and later refined in the *Berkley Downtown Design Guidelines*. The following description of the character areas largely follows those articulated in the *Berkley Downtown Design Guidelines*.



## Gateway West

### *Twelve Mile Road from Greenfield Road to Buckingham Avenue*

The commercial development character within this node includes a mix of traditional commercial buildings fronting the sidewalk and more auto-oriented, latter-day strip commercial uses defined by deep setbacks from the sidewalk. Although this area is mostly built out, there are pockets of underutilized land and empty parcels. There is also minimal variation in lot depths. All buildings within Gateway West are of one to two-story in height and constructed with a variety of materials, including brick, stone, concrete, wood, and other material types. Architecturally distinctive buildings include a one-story Colonial Revival-styled commercial building at Twelve Mile and Cummings Avenue and some pre-World War II two-story commercial buildings found toward Buckingham Avenue. Most buildings have been altered over time with new façade materials; in some cases, storefronts have been modified with reduced glazing dimensions or enclosed entirely. Several buildings may have been used for industrial or heavy commercial purposes given the presence of enclosed garage service spaces and curb cuts.

The Gateway West area streetscape environment is mainly characterized by concrete sidewalks and irregular tree plantings between Greenfield Road and Buckingham Avenue. In some locations, brick paving areas were installed around tree plantings or along the curbside, as found in the block between Phillips and Oakshire Avenues. Some blocks have an absence of trees and sidewalk pavement treatment. There is also a lack of wayfinding and gateway elements towards the Greenfield Road end of the corridor. Standard highway cobra-head street lighting is used in the Gateway West area.



## Traditional Downtown Core

### *Twelve Mile Road to Coolidge Highway/Buckingham Avenue to Catalpa Drive*

Extending from Buckingham Avenue on the west along Twelve Mile to Catalpa Drive south along Coolidge, the Traditional Downtown Core contains the most significant concentration of older traditional, pedestrian-oriented commercial development, with some variation in that development pattern towards the Twelve Mile Road-Coolidge Highway intersection. Buildings are typically one to two-stories in height, constructed mainly between the 1920s and 60s, and feature mostly masonry construction, although the installation of EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finishing Systems) on storefronts and facades has altered the appearance of several buildings in the area. Lot depths are more significant in a sub-area along Twelve Mile from Buckingham Avenue and Wakefield Road where a concentration of off-street parking lots to the rear of the buildings exists.

The Berkley Theater is the architectural icon for Downtown Berkley and is located towards the western end of this area; other architecturally distinctive buildings—1920s, 30s, and Mid-Century commercial vernaculars are found throughout the Downtown Core. Given the built-out nature of the DDA District and its relative lot sizes, consolidation of lots and parcels will be necessary to facilitate new development.

As opposed to the Gateway districts, the urban design environment in the Downtown Core is more consistent and unified in appearance with curbside brick paving along the sidewalks; and, rather than irregularly-spaced trees, landscaping is placed in corner planting areas and in curb extensions along Twelve Mile between the Coolidge intersection and Gardner Avenue. In addition, on-street parallel parking spaces and low-scale, traditional lighting fixtures are found throughout the area. Off-street parking lots, including those that front the building, lack proper landscaping and buffering treatments.



## Gateway South

### *Coolidge Highway from Catalpa Drive to Eleven Mile Road*

Although the Gateway South character area maintains Downtown Berkley's low-scale building environment of one to two-story commercial buildings, it exhibits a more varied development pattern, with small to mid-sized developments—some with significant setbacks from the sidewalk—served by rear and side parking lots. The sector also has a higher proportion of recent construction, including stand-alone office buildings. A variety of building materials are used in the sub-area, including brick, stone, EIFS, and architectural concrete. There are opportunities for infill and redevelopment within this area, including adaptive use potential with the former Our Lady of La Salette School at Coolidge and Oxford Road.

Despite the four lanes of traffic along Coolidge, the Gateway South pedestrian environment benefits from slightly wider sidewalks and a mature tree canopy. The area, however, does lack curb extensions and contains little to no landscaping treatments to buffer parking areas to the sidewalk, making the pedestrian environment less comfortable and visually unappealing. Cobra-head light standards are used in this sector, along with a handful of more traditional pedestrian scale light fixtures.





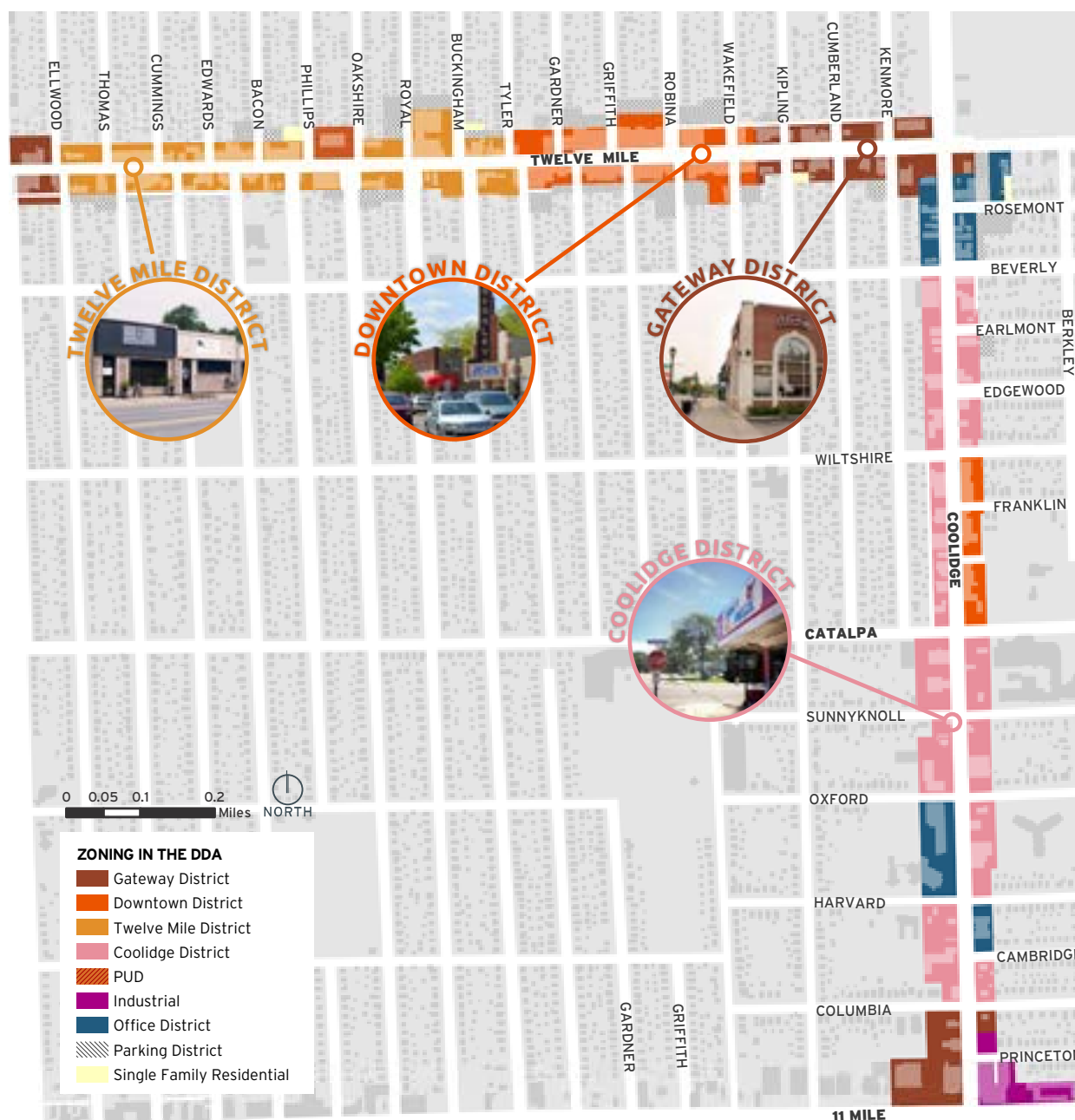
# EXISTING ZONING

Downtown Berkley is zoned in one of six zoning classifications: The Twelve Mile Road District (east of Greenfield Road and west of Tyler Avenue); the Local Business and Office Districts (LB and OD Districts—found in pockets along Twelve Mile and Coolidge); the Coolidge District (principally along Coolidge from the Twelve Mile intersection to Columbia Road); the Gateway District (designated at the Greenfield-Twelve Mile Road, Coolidge-Twelve Mile Road, and Coolidge-Eleven Mile Road intersections); and the Parking District, found mainly along the rear of commercial buildings along Twelve Mile and in sporadic pockets along Coolidge (see Figure 3: DDA Zoning Map). A summary of Downtown Berkley zoning district requirements is provided in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: Downtown Berkley Zoning District Requirements**

ZONING DISTRICT	MIN LOT AREA	HEIGHT LIMIT	FRONT SETBACK	SPECIAL DESIGN REQUIREMENTS	SPECIAL USES	OTHER
<b>LO-Local Office</b>	None	30 feet	10 feet	None	Yes – Outpatient facilities, veterinary clinics	Interior retail display areas must be accessory
<b>LB-Local Business</b>	15,000 square feet for auto service stations	30 feet	10 feet	Minimum storefront glazing and front façade main entrance	Service stations, drive-ins, and open-air commercial uses	
<b>DD-Downtown District</b>	None	None	None	Minimum storefront glazing, window sill and front façade main entrance	Yes – First floor office, banks, convenience stores, outdoor sales and eating areas	First floor residential is not permitted
<b>GD-Gateway District</b>	15,000 square feet for auto service stations	40 feet	10 feet	Minimum storefront glazing and front façade main entrance	Yes - Service stations, drive-ins, and open-air commercial uses	Residential siding materials not permitted
<b>CD-Coolidge District</b>	15,000 square feet for auto service stations	40 feet	10 Feet	Minimum storefront glazing and front façade main entrance	Yes - Service stations, drive-ins, and open-air commercial uses	Residential siding materials not permitted
<b>TM- Twelve Mile Road District</b>	15,000 square feet for auto service stations	40 feet	10 Feet	Minimum storefront glazing and front façade main entrance	Yes - Service stations, drive-ins, and open-air commercial uses	
<b>Parking District</b>	4,000 square feet to parcels within the LB or LO zoning districts.	NA	NA	NA	Yes- Drive-throughs accessory to commercial uses in LB and LO zoning districts	Drive-throughs not permitted for grocery stores, food services, gas stations or car washes

FIGURE 3: DDA Zoning Map



Generally, the DDA District zoning classifications permit a wide range of commercial uses. However, various office types and civic uses are principally encouraged in the LO-Local Office District, while more substantial commercial uses—including contractor offices, as well as hardware and lumber stores—are reserved for the Gateway and Coolidge zoning districts. Residential uses are permitted in building upper-stories in all zoning classifications, although stand-alone townhouses and apartments are only allowed in the Twelve Mile Road District.

Few special uses are defined in each of the zoning classifications, mainly limited to gas service stations, drive-ins, and “open-air” businesses—restaurants and food-serving establishments with outdoor eating areas, for instance. Peculiarly, banks, offices, convenience stores, and re-sale shops, among others, are classified as special uses in the Downtown District, an area of Downtown Berkeley that could potentially complement the existing commercial use base.

Overall, there are not many substantive differences in the use and bulk requirements between the different Downtown Berkeley zoning classifications, with the exception of height and special use requirements. There is one Planned Unit Development (PUD) within the DDA District, located on the north side of Twelve Mile Road between Phillips and Oakshire Avenue. Planned Unit Developments are defined under Division 18 of the Berkeley Zoning Ordinance.

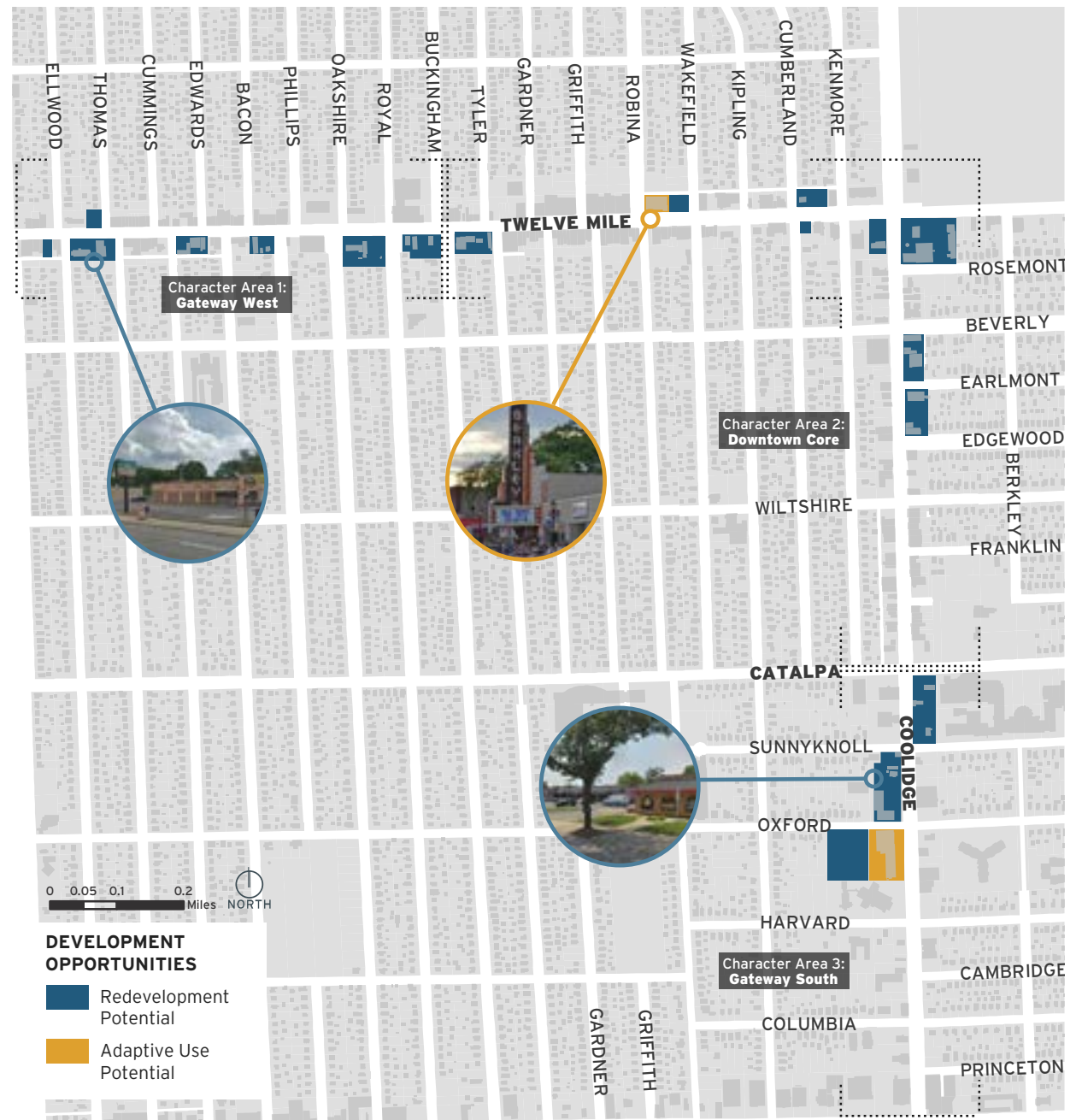
# CATALYTIC & ADAPTIVE USE SITES

There are a number of sites in Downtown Berkley with development potential. Certain opportunity sites were identified as a part of the *Berkley Downtown Design Guidelines* document—such as the concept for a mixed use development as a part of City Hall at Twelve Mile and Coolidge Highway, and the redevelopment of the parcel on the west side of Coolidge at Twelve Mile Road.

As a part of this existing conditions analysis, additional sites have been identified that could be considered for redevelopment (highlighted in navy blue in Figure 4). A handful of sites have also been identified as potential candidates for adaptive use—such as the Berkley Theater and the Our Lady of La Salette school property.

Though many of these sites were identified by community members as a part of the Big Map Exercise (see page 64), further discussion with the project Task Force is needed to determine which sites should be considered for further analysis.

FIGURE 4: Development Opportunities Map





# BUSINESS & MARKET CONDITIONS

A Downtown Master Plan should be responsive to a community vision, placed in the context of market conditions and possibilities. Market conditions identify both opportunities and limitations: The Berkley DDA and the City have leveraged Berkley's many unique independent businesses as a point of pride and differentiation. At the same time, the realities of the grocery industry, for example, have made it more difficult to attract a full-line grocery store Downtown.

Market conditions include the demographic composition of Berkley and its nearby trade areas, the existing downtown business mix and its performance, and consumer preferences. Additional factors that influence the market context include the building inventory and its suitability for desired tenants or development, regional competition, the regulatory environment, and others.

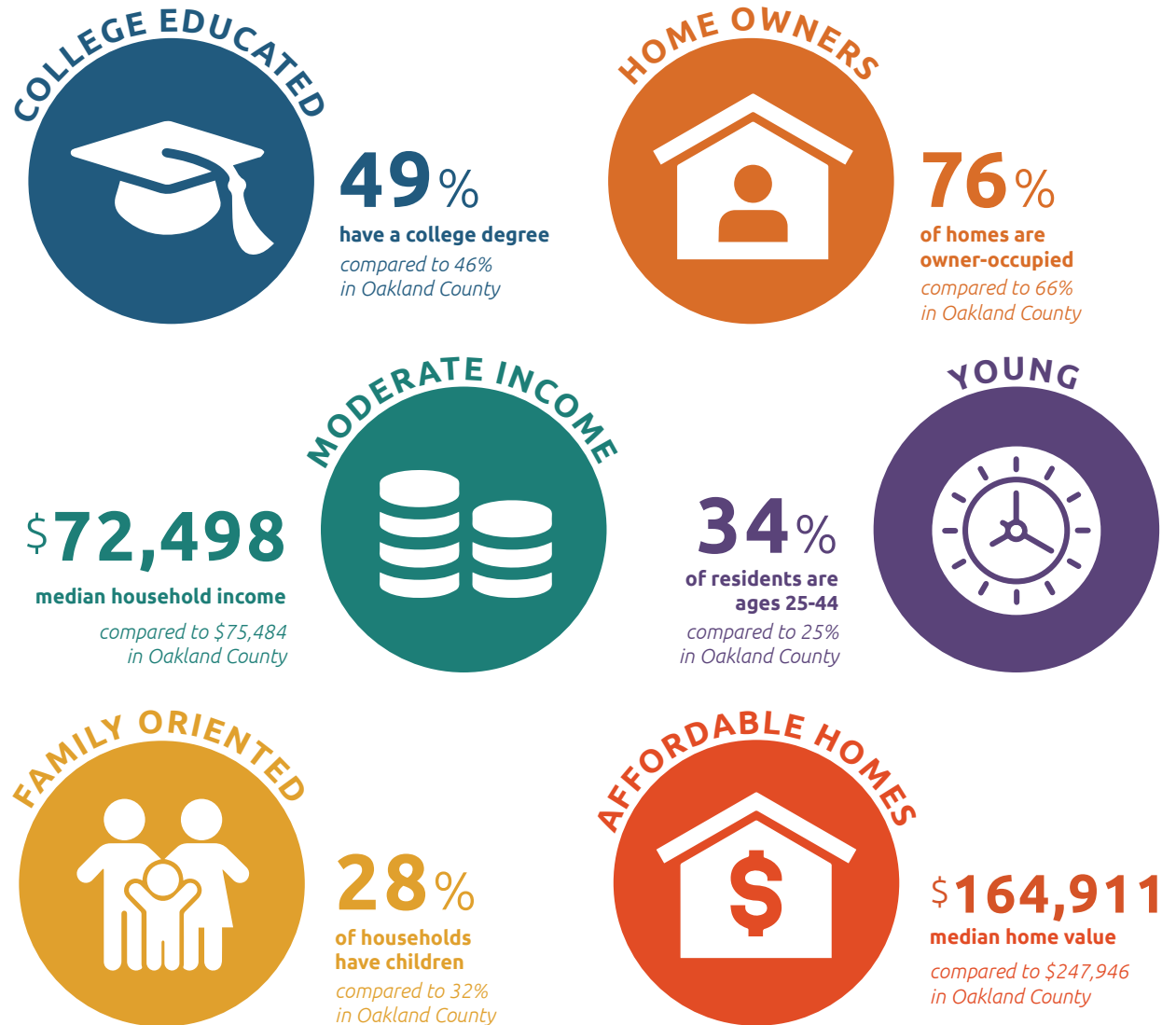
Much of the information highlighted in this section is summarized from Berkley's *Retail Positioning Strategy* (2017) by MJB Consulting.



## BERKLEY DEMOGRAPHICS

While Berkley's household income is more moderate than some nearby Oakland County communities, the population has many other highly desirable attributes, including its large percentage of college-educated residents and its high homeownership rate. Berkley households are also relatively young, meaning they are still in their "household formation," or growth, years. This, combined with high homeownership and education rates, are desirable traits in a consumer market.

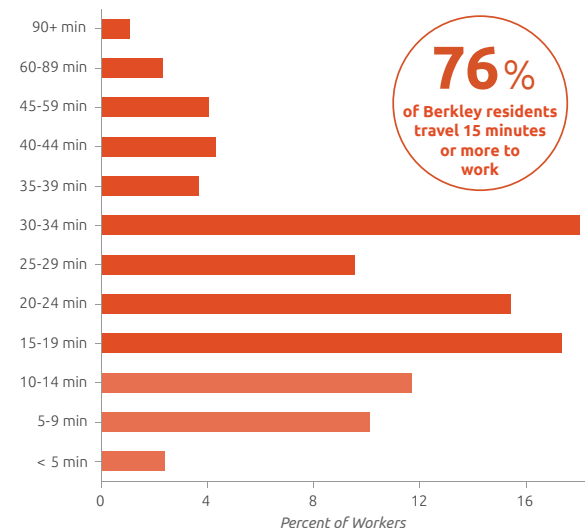
FIGURE 5: Berkley Population Traits



COLLEGE EDUCATED: Retail Incentives 2014, MJB Consulting | HOME OWNERSHIP: Retail Incentives 2014, MJB Consulting  
MEDIAN INCOME: Esri Community Profile, 2018 | AGE: Esri community Profile, 2010 | HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN: Retail Incentives 2014, MJB Consulting  
HOME VALUE: ACS Housing Summary by Esri, 2010-2016 ACS Estimate

**FIGURE 6: Largest Employers of Oakland County**

- 1** **Beaumont Health** Health Care System  
18,301 Local Employees, Based in Royal Oak
- 2** **FCA US LLC** Automobile Manufacturer  
13,099 Local Employees, Based in Auburn Hills
- 3** **General Motors Co** Automobile Manufacturer  
9,687 Local Employees, Based in Detroit
- 4** **Ascension Michigan** Health Care System  
5,474 Local Employees, Based in Warren
- 5** **U.S. Postal Service** Postal Service  
4,195 Local Employees, Based in Detroit

**FIGURE 7: Travel Time to Work**LARGEST EMPLOYERS: *Crain's Business Detroit*, 2017TRANSPORTATION TO WORK: *ACS Survey, US Census Bureau*, 2010

## Oakland County Employers and Local Commute Times

Oakland County hosts several nearby large employers, primarily in healthcare and automobile manufacturing, though none of these are in Berkley. With no major employment centers in Berkley, it makes sense that most employed Berkley residents commute 15 minutes or more to work. This implies that most employed Berkley residents are away from Downtown Berkley during typical retail shopping hours.

## Berkley Consumer Profiles

The *Retail Positioning Strategy* reports Berkley households falling largely into two “lifestyle” segments. Consumer lifestyle segmentation, or “psychographics”, broadly describes the behaviors of American households by offering a narrative of their preferences. In Berkley, the largest represented segments are “Midwestern Traditional” (59 percent) and “Newer Arrivals” (22 percent). These profiles are characterized by:

### MIDWESTERN TRADITIONAL

- Homeowners with modest incomes
- Family oriented “homebodies”
- Budget-conscious shoppers
- Preference for American-made items
- Dine at casual sit-down chains

### NEWER ARRIVALS

- College-educated and affluent
- Urbane lifestyle, patron of “high culture”
- Focus on the home, remodeling
- Attentive to price, users of coupons
- Do not necessarily have children

Lifestyle segment descriptions by their nature are generalized. They do not limit what can happen in Downtown Berkley, but can help inform future choices match consumer preferences.

## BERKLEY'S RETAIL POSITIONING STRATEGY

The current Downtown Master Plan builds on recent work by others, including the *Retail Positioning Strategy* completed in 2017 by MJB Consulting. That study focuses on market positioning for Downtown Berkley and its merchants, and how businesses can align themselves with target consumers.

The *Retail Positioning Strategy* highlights some of Downtown Berkley's differentiating traits, such as being unpretentious and eclectic in its business mix. It also notes the advantages of plentiful free parking and lower rents than nearby upscale centers. Independent businesses make Downtown Berkley what it is. It describes Downtown's audience as "artsy" and not "edgy", with five primary sub-markets:

- Females in their 30s and 40s seeking practical styles
- Families with young children
- Destination-driven "neo-hipsters," in their 20s and early 30s
- "Gamers"
- Older traditionalists (e.g., local empty-nesters)

The study emphasizes expanded dining options, as well as "third places" for community gathering. Healthy food offerings and craft beer align with the target demographic and align with many existing businesses, such as boutique fitness studios. In tenancing and recruitment initiatives, the *Retail Positioning Strategy* recommends focusing efforts on:

- Retail boutiques such as women's apparel (including thrift/consignment), gifts, books, and other niche retail
- Additional food and beverage concepts
- "Third place" venues

Across these categories, the study emphasizes independent businesses and "chain-lets" (small/regional chains that have demonstrated success) because they align with Downtown Berkley's character.

To achieve these goals, the plan recommends a range of incentives, conceptual planning solutions, and regulatory tools. These include:

- Creating a retail recruiter position within the DDA;
- Expanding paid and editorial media presence to raise Berkley's profile in the Detroit metro;
- Providing businesses with marketing and other professional consultant resources;
- Permitting only "public-facing" businesses (e.g., retail, restaurants) in ground-floor spaces;
- Improving district design through better storefront signs, effective way-finding, and traffic calming solutions.

This Master Plan will expand these consumer and market characteristics into guiding strategies for Coolidge and Twelve Mile Road. These strategies will align future economic development with future improvements to public space and infrastructure, property development, wayfinding, and branding.



## BUSINESS IN BERKLEY

Sales leakage analysis is less relevant in Berkley given the limited depth of comparison-goods shopping. Retail leakage has traditionally been a benchmark for a downtown's competitiveness, but has become less meaningful in recent years as online shopping is changing consumer behaviors across most retail categories.

A different way of gauging whether the downtown business mix is meeting consumer demand is to look at consumer buying power in relation to the current business mix. Groceries, restaurant dining, and apparel are among Berkley's largest categories of consumer expenditures (Table 2). The large number of restaurants (Figure 8) aligns with consumer spending. In other areas, like apparel and groceries, shoppers have few options in Downtown.

Opportunities exist to carve out niches within groceries and apparel while acknowledging that structural shifts in these sectors present challenges to broad expansion.

TABLE 2: Total Annual Household Expenditures ("Buying Power") by Spending Category

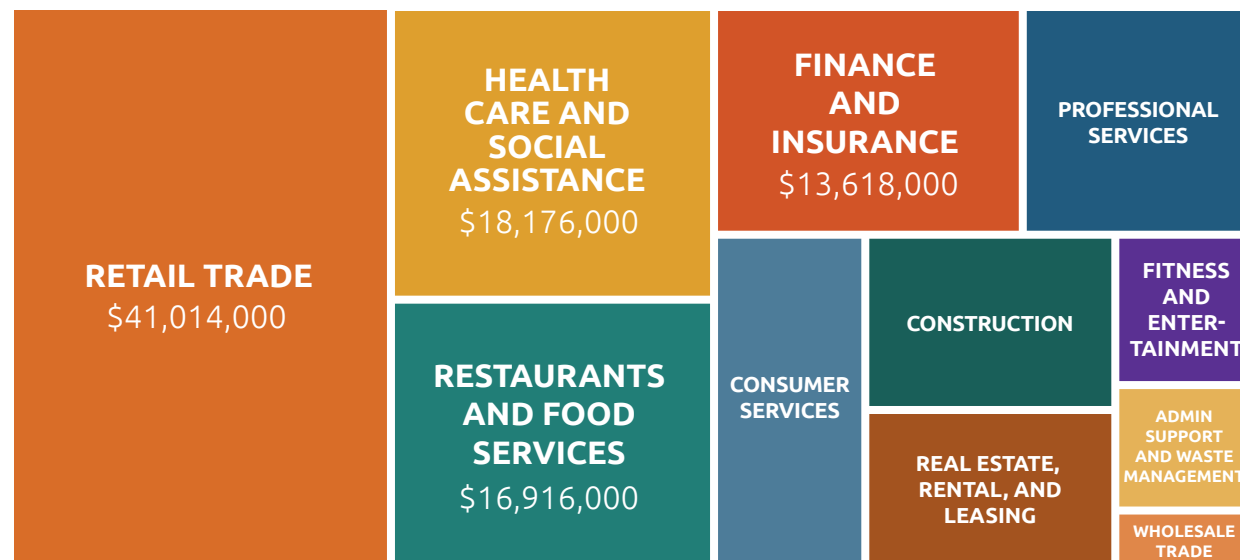
CATEGORY	BERKLEY (CITY)	1 MILE	3 MILES	5 MILES
<b>Apparel and services</b>	<b>\$ 15,223,000</b>	<b>\$ 17,586,000</b>	<b>\$ 148,683,000</b>	<b>\$ 332,174,000</b>
Men's apparel	2,908,000	3,357,000	28,285,000	63,200,000
Women's apparel	5,245,000	6,061,000	51,403,000	114,501,000
Children's apparel	2,303,000	2,637,000	21,648,000	48,669,000
<b>Movies, museums, parks</b>	542,000	633,000	5,421,000	11,960,000
<b>Pets</b>	4,554,000	5,204,000	42,987,000	96,344,000
<b>Toys, games, crafts, hobbies</b>	842,000	967,000	8,000,000	17,854,000
<b>Reading</b>	818,000	940,000	7,908,000	17,564,000
<b>Food at home (groceries)</b>	<b>35,614,000</b>	<b>41,014,000</b>	<b>342,580,000</b>	<b>768,522,000</b>
<b>Food away from home (restaurants)</b>	<b>24,872,000</b>	<b>28,735,000</b>	<b>241,821,000</b>	<b>539,274,000</b>
<b>Alcoholic beverages</b>	4,050,000	4,682,000	39,669,000	87,906,000
<b>Prescription drugs</b>	2,731,000	3,097,000	25,220,000	56,952,000
<b>Eye glasses and contact lenses</b>	699,000	794,000	6,497,000	14,517,000
<b>Furniture</b>	4,457,000	5,121,000	42,873,000	95,911,000
<b>Appliances</b>	2,577,000	2,920,000	23,872,000	53,713,000
<b>Housewares</b>	760,000	869,000	7,182,000	15,995,000

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURES: Esri Community Profile, 2018

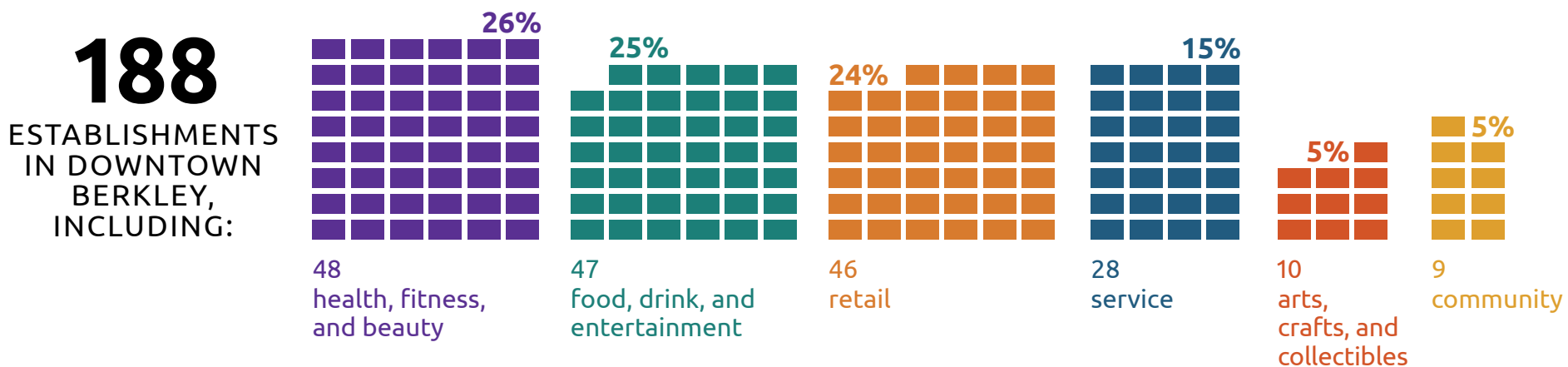
Specialty retail stores are among Downtown Berkley's jewels. Many of these are destinations and unique to Berkley. Downtown also hosts a large number of consumer-oriented services, both specialized and more generic. While the community views Downtown Berkley as lacking business diversity (see page 56), Downtown is, in fact, home to an eclectic mix of mostly independently-owned businesses. Taken together, retail businesses, health/fitness/beauty businesses, and food/drink/entertainment businesses account for 75 percent of the inventory. All of these businesses are consumer-facing.

Still, the lengths of the two roads can project a different perception to the observer.

**FIGURE 9: Relative Total Sales Volume by Business Category**



**FIGURE 8: Existing DDA Business Mix**



SALES VOLUME: Esri Community Profile, 2018  
BUSINESS MIX: Berkley Downtown Development Authority

**FIGURE 10: Existing DDA Business Mix Map**

What many consider the "heart" of Berkley's Downtown Core is located between Wakefield Road and Tyler Avenue on Twelve Mile Road. This sub area contains a dense mix of mostly retail, along with food and drink establishments, and health, beauty and fitness establishments. The majority of Berkley's service establishments are located in Gateway West, west of Tyler Avenue on Twelve Mile Road.

Coolidge Avenue is home to many of Berkley's civic institutions, such as City Hall and the Berkley Public Library. Many food and drink businesses are located here, along with a vibrant pocket of retail between Wiltshire Road and Catalpa Drive.





## Key Takeaways

- Retail remains an important component of Downtown Berkley's business mix and it generates the largest portion of sales volume.
- Restaurants are a significant portion of the business mix and generate a proportional amount of sales.
- Services (e.g., personal care, repair services, etc.) represent a large portion of the business mix, but generate a relatively smaller portion of sales volumes.
- Taken together, retail, health/fitness/beauty, and food/drink/entertainment account for 75 percent of the business inventory Downtown – more consumer-facing businesses than first meets the eye.
- Downtown includes several key business sectors that are less visible than retail, restaurants, and services. These include healthcare, finance, professional services, and construction.





# PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

## ACCESS & GATEWAYS

Berkley is approximately 14 miles from Downtown Detroit located along the western edge of the Woodward Avenue corridor. From the early 1900s, the Pontiac Division of the Detroit Interurban lines provided rail service along Woodward Avenue to Twelve Mile Road, which connected the growing village to Detroit's employment opportunities within an hour transit trip<sup>1</sup>. Incorporated as a village in 1923, the City of Berkley has many characteristics of suburban development typical of the period, including a well defined street grid and walkable commercial corridors. Twelve Mile Road and Coolidge Highway were first paved in the late 1920s. As automobile production grew to become the dominant local industry (such as the Highland Park Ford Plant), automobile use grew to be a favored mode of mobility.

Today, Berkley supports a population of approximately 15,239 people<sup>2</sup>. Of these, most (91 percent) commute to work by driving alone. Berkley residents own an average of two cars per household. Their average commute time is about 22 minutes. Approximately four percent of residents commute by public transit (0.8 percent), walking (1.9 percent), or by bicycle (1.4 percent), while five percent use carpool and 4.5 percent work from home. These commuting patterns roughly match those of the surrounding Oakland County, with slight increases in commuters not using automobiles.

Berkley's main gateway is at the intersection of Twelve Mile and Coolidge Highway. This remains the primary entrance to Downtown Berkley. Secondary gateways exist to the south at Coolidge Highway and Eleven Mile Road, and to the west at Twelve Mile and Greenfield Road.

1. Barclay, Parsons & Klapp (1915) "Report on Detroit Street Railway Traffic and Proposed Subway" <https://archive.org/stream/reportondetroit9582pars#page/n55/mode/1up>

2. 2016 American Community Census

# PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE & TRANSIT NETWORK

## Pedestrian Access

Berkley has a well-defined network of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. All residential and commercial streets have sidewalks. Work has been completed on Twelve Mile between Gardner Avenue and Coolidge to improve the pedestrian experience, including curb extensions and enhanced crosswalk painting. Enhanced pedestrian crossings were installed on Coolidge at Earlmont Road and Dorthea Road.

During stakeholder interviews and community workshops, residents reported that the Downtown corridors’ sidewalks were uneven and may create challenges for some users.

TABLE 3: Intersections with Missing ADA Compliant Curb Ramps

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb ramps are missing at the following locations:	
1. Twelve Mile and Ellwood	13. Twelve Mile & Cumberland (crossing Twelve Mile)
2. Twelve Mile and Thomas	14. Twelve Mile & Kenmore (crossing Twelve Mile)
3. Twelve Mile and Cummings	15. Coolidge and Rosemont
4. Twelve Mile and Prairie	16. Coolidge and Beverly
5. Twelve Mile and Bacon	17. Coolidge and Edgewood (crossing Coolidge)
6. Twelve Mile and Phillips	18. Coolidge and Wiltshire
7. Twelve Mile and Oakshire	19. Coolidge and Sunnyknoll
8. Twelve Mile and Royal	20. Coolidge and Oxford
9. Twelve Mile and Buckingham	21. Coolidge and Cambridge (crossing Coolidge)
10. Twelve Mile & Gardner (crossing Twelve Mile)	22. Coolidge and Columbia (crossing Coolidge)
11. Twelve Mile & Robina (crossing Twelve Mile)	23. Coolidge and Princeton (crossing Coolidge)
12. Twelve Mile & Kipling (crossing Twelve Mile)	

## Bicycle Access

Berkley does not have specific infrastructure dedicated to bicycles. There are approximately 14 miles of locally mapped bike links, as well as other potential bicycle facilities identified by SEMCOG as bicycle-supportive, but without specific route signage.

As evidenced by the comments received in public meetings and stakeholder interviews, Berkley is home to many recreational cyclists. Most reported relying on the city's fine-grained network of slow residential streets and sidewalks to move safely through the city. Catalpa Road was identified as a key bicycle link.

Beaumont Hospital to the north of Berkley has indicated that they have bicycle racks provided on site and actively encourage their employees to bicycle to work using Berkley's streets.

Berkley will host two MoGo Bicycle Share stations in the near future as part of MoGo's expansion into southeast Oakland County. Huntington Woods, Oak Park, Royal Oak, and Ferndale will all be adding MoGo Stations. It is hoped that this infrastructure will help spur demand for bicycle infrastructure. Given its favorable cycling attributes; it is likely that micromobility companies (eScooters, eBikes, and dockless bike share) will also be in Berkley to compete for short-trip (less than 2 miles) travel demands.



Of the Downtown corridors, there are approximately 20 direct intersections and 13 offset intersections (on Twelve Mile Road between Greenfield and Wakefield). There are ten traffic signals spread across these 33 intersections. All ten signalized intersections include some intersection legs with striped crosswalks and pedestrian signals. However, this treatment is inconsistent. While the crossings of Twelve Mile and Coolidge are typically striped, the cross streets do not have either striping or pedestrian signals.

None of Berkley's pedestrian signals communicate information about the WALK—DON'T WALK intervals at signalized intersections in non-visual formats (i.e., audible tones and vibrotactile surfaces) to pedestrians who are blind or have low vision.

Of the intersections highlighted in Table 3, safe crossing opportunities should be prioritized at Cumberland crossing Twelve Mile, Robina crossing Twelve Mile, and Gardner crossing Twelve Mile. A crossing at Robina, in particular, was mentioned by residents as being beneficial due to the commercial density and parking options on either side of Twelve Mile Road. The City has planned an enhanced crosswalk at this intersection for the coming year.



## Transit Access

Berkley receives fixed-route and paratransit public transit services as provided by Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) that is overseen by the Regional Transit Authority for Southeast Michigan. The following routes are present:

**TABLE 5: Transit Service**

SMART BUS ROUTES	WEEKDAY PEAK HEADWAY
740 Twelve Mile Crosstown	Every 60 minutes
415 - 420 Greenfield Southfield	Every 40 minutes

In Berkley, the 740 provides bus service on Twelve Mile between Greenfield and Coolidge, and on Coolidge between Twelve Mile and Eleven Mile connecting to the bus terminal in Royal Oak. The 415- 420 bus line provides service on Greenfield to Southfield. Transit frequency in Berkley is not high enough to support consistent ridership, but the coverage in key commercial areas is adequate. Though there are approximately 22 signed bus stops along Twelve Mile and Coolidge, none of the stops have shelters or seating.

In the absence of frequent transit service in the Downtown, a private shuttle is run during public events and promotional activities such as Ladies Night Out. Figure 11 illustrates the bicycle and transit network coverage.

**FIGURE 11: Transit and Bicycle Network Map**





## Safety / Traffic Violence

To create a healthier, safer and more livable Downtown Berkley, there needs to be a citywide commitment to eliminate, not just reduce, traffic deaths and serious injuries on Berkley streets. In Southeast Michigan, there is a level of acceptance to the dangers represented by motor vehicles to pedestrians and other users of the road. In Oakland County, there were 41,783 reported crashes that resulted in 69 fatalities and 10,570 injuries in 2017. That same year, 281 people were killed or seriously injured in pedestrian crashes in Oakland County. This represented 11% of all those killed or seriously injured in all of the 41,783 crashes in Oakland County (not just pedestrian crashes). This is significant, as it represents a disproportionate amount of people being killed or seriously injured in the pedestrian crashes that occur.

It is important to think about measures that Downtown Berkley can take to reduce impacts of the regional transportation safety context.

Challenges exist in connecting pedestrian rights of way across both Twelve Mile and Coolidge. While there are many signalized intersections in key pedestrian areas, additional safety features and crossing opportunities are warranted.

Between 2013 and 2018, 629 crashes occurred along the two commercial corridors. This number has remained consistent, ranging between 118 and 138 crashes per year. Of the crashes that occurred, 80 percent involved property damage only, and 4 percent of the crashes involved pedestrians or bicyclists. Of that 4 percent, 63 percent resulted in injury.

The map in Figure 12 highlights crash data and illustrates the locations of the pedestrian and bicycle crashes. Of the many locations highlighted, the Twelve Mile intersections of Greenfield, Buckingham/Tyler, Griffith, Wakefield and Coolidge show conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. On Coolidge, areas adjacent to Berkley High School (Catalpa and Sunnyknoll) show a history of crashes in locations where many children are present.

FIGURE 12: Pedestrian Safety Map



## AUTOMOBILE NETWORK

Both Twelve Mile Road and Coolidge Highway feature two travel lanes in each direction, and either a left-turn lane, or stretches of on-street parking where the right-of-way widths permit. In general, travel lanes are 11 feet wide and the on-street parking ranges from 7 to 7.5 feet. Speed limits on Twelve Mile and Coolidge are 30 mph.

Per the State of Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Maps, the following four roads saw the highest traffic volumes in Berkley (see Table 4). Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) is the estimated mean daily traffic volume that passes in both directions along these links.

**TABLE 4: Top Berkley Streets by Traffic Volume**

STREET NAME	LINK	ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC
Greenfield Road*	Catalpa and Twelve Mile	26,878 (2012)
Coolidge Highway	Catalpa and Eleven Mile	17,072 (2015)
Twelve Mile Road*	Coolidge and Greenfield	16,309 (2016)
Catalpa Drive	Coolidge and Greenfield	6,468 (2008)

\* Truck Routes

Figure 13 illustrates the various traffic volumes across Berkley as well as the location of signalized intersections.

**FIGURE 13: Automobile Network with AADT per link and Signalized Intersections**



# PARKING

## Previous Parking Analysis

In May 2009, Berkley's DDA, in partnership with LSL Planning Inc, completed a parking plan to identify parking deficiencies and determine strategies to meet Berkley's future parking needs. This plan outlined a set of nine specific goals it sought to achieve through this effort, which included to maximize the efficiency of existing municipal parking lots and private lots, promote a cooperative parking approach between businesses, implement parking to support infill development, and improve marketability of certain buildings with limited parking.

This plan examined the entire DDA district, extending from the intersection of Coolidge and Twelve Mile one mile to the west to Greenfield Road, and one mile to the south to Eleven Mile Road. Key findings of the study were primarily derived from parking utilization surveys conducted during the morning, afternoon, and evening on a typical weekday, and Friday, and Saturday during the holiday season.

These times and season were recommended from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and National Parking Association (NPA).

These surveys found that the peak parking utilization occurred in the weekday afternoon and evening, with the largest concentration of demand occurring along Twelve Mile between Wakefield Road and Tyler Avenue. Overall, Coolidge saw a lower demand rate, with the majority of facilities not exceeding a 70 percent occupancy rate.

The results of these surveys, along with feedback from the public, were used to identify key parking issues and inform the recommendations, which were classified into four primary categories:

1. New, expanded and reconfigured municipal parking lots, including wayfinding signs to those lots.
2. Enhancements to on-street parking.
3. Improvements to expand capacity, shared parking, or better managed use of private parking lots.
4. Revisions to the municipal zoning ordinance parking standards.

**FIGURE 14: Key Parking Projects from 2009 Parking Study**





**FIGURE 15: Berkley On-Street and Off-Street Parking Assets**

Specifically, four capital key capital projects were identified (Figure 7):

- A. Pursue expansion, reconfiguration and pedestrian amenities to municipal lots along Twelve Mile Road between Tyler Avenue and Wakefield Road.
- B. Coordinate the layout and striping of the lot between Tyler Avenue and Griffith Avenue along Twelve Mile Road.
- C. Expand municipal lots on Coolidge Highway between Wiltshire Road and Catalpa Drive.
- D. Incorporate new on-street parking and shared parking for Edgewood area businesses, adjacent to Coolidge Highway.

Since the plan was developed, the primary action taken has been the acquisition of the parking lot associated with Berkley High School (Project C), which has been converted to municipal parking and made available to the public.

The following map (Figure 15) illustrates the locations of Berkley's parking assets.



## MUNICIPAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY

In October 2010, the Berkley City Council adopted Resolution R-48-10 which declared support of “Complete Streets” policies and directed the Planning Commission to begin preparing an amendment to the City Master Plan that would include a section on multimodal transportation. In May 2012, the Council adopted the *Berkley Multi-Modal Transportation Plan* as part of the Master Plan for the City of Berkley. The Plan included a list of recommendations to improve Berkley’s streets for all users. The recommendations included the following types of interventions:

- Ordinance Amendments / Changes in City Policies
- Engineering Studies
- Capital Improvements
- City Program Changes
- Other Observations

The Berkley Code of Ordinances includes a multitude of individual ordinances pertaining to traffic, transportation, and parking. Parking, in particular, is the subject or a component of 86 ordinances. Thus, navigating through the various policies and requirements likely proves challenging for residents and business owners.

In March 2018, a new article was added to Chapter 106 of the Berkley City Code that impacts public space, transportation infrastructure development, and maintenance. “Article VI. Complete Streets” defines complete streets as those that enable safe and convenient access for all legal users of public streets, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists of all ages and abilities. The article also established policy enabling the City Planning Commission to create a “non-motorized transportation network plan” including “accommodations for accessibility, sidewalks, curb ramps and cuts, trains and pathways, signage and bike lanes.” More importantly, once the non-motorized transportation plan is adopted, the article mandates that the City keep all public street projects or public street reconstruction projects in conformity.

Important exceptions to the policy include:

- Where bicycle and pedestrian facilities are “prohibited by law;”
- Where encouraging walking, biking, and transit are “contrary to public health and safety;”
- Where the cost would be excessively disproportionate to the need or potential use, and
- Where the cost would result in an unacceptable diminishing of other City services.

## Parking Policy

The City of Berkley does not have a singular parking policy. Rather, parking requirements scattered across the city's various zoning regulations provide parking stipulations regarding minimum parking requirements and shared parking.

Minimum off-street parking requirements are separated into five major land uses categories: residential, institutional, commercial, office, and industrial. Table 6 summarizes the City of Berkley's minimum parking requirements for select land uses in comparison to the national standards, as specified in ITE's *Parking Generation Manual, 4th Edition*.

Handicapped spaces in the City must comply with the State of Michigan Barrier-Free Rules, as stated in Michigan Public Act No. 1 of 1996.

The City allows for private parking assets to be shared through a 'joint use' agreement stating that the parking can be "reduced by the zoning officer whenever the facilities served

do not operate during the same hours" if the presence of an agreement between joint users is presented and signed.

There are also shared parking opportunities for public parking assets as well, with a zoning stipulation stating that "required off-street parking may be located within 500 feet of the building or use it is intended to serve, measured without crossing Twelve Mile Road, Coolidge Highway, Greenfield Road, Woodward Avenue, or Catalpa Drive from the nearest point of the required off-street parking facility," While this policy facilitates shared parking and density, there is an opportunity to allow the 500 feet distance be applied across major thoroughfares as well, which would enhance pedestrian connections within the downtown area. One example of this need would be Alex's of Berkley on Twelve Mile and Cumberland Road, which uses municipal parking assets on the north side of Twelve Mile for their customers and employees.

## Key Takeaways

- Even though Twelve Mile and Coolidge discourage active transportation, demand is growing.
- Private parking assets adjacent to the commercial corridors may be underutilized.
- Municipal parking ordinances need to be aggregated and organized.
- Municipal parking policy can be updated to support economic development and walkable streets.
- Plans to "right-size" Coolidge Highway will provide increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists by reducing traffic speeds and lowering volumes, as well as providing additional street parking.
- Public transit connections exist, but transit supportive infrastructure such as shelters, benches and enhanced wayfinding technology is nonexistent.
- The DDA should explore ways to engage with new mobility options, such as curbspace management, mobility hubs, and micromobility services (such as Bikeshare, eScooters, Etc.). Encouraging the use of other transportation options to private vehicles is key to ensuring Downtown Berkley's competitive advantages over peer downtowns.

**TABLE 6: Minimum Parking Requirements per Land Use**

LAND USE	CITY OF BERKLEY	UNIT	NATIONAL STANDARD	UNIT
Multifamily residential	2.00	/dwelling unit	1.2	/dwelling unit
Single-family residential	1.00	/dwelling unit	1.83	/dwelling unit
Convenience/department store	6.00	/1000 sqft of usable floor area	2.87	/1000 sqft GFA
Restaurant	1.00	/60 sqft of usable floor area	75ft	/1000 sqft GFA
Library	1.00	/150 sqft of usable floor area	3.5	/1000 sqft GFA
Office	1.00	/225 sqft of usable floor area	2.84	/1000 sqft GFA







## Chapter 3

# COMMUNITY INPUT



# OUTREACH PROCESS

A photograph of a person's hand pointing at a display board. The board is titled 'FOOD TRUCK COURTYARD' and 'ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC SPACES'. It features various images and text, including a section labeled 'POP-UP CAFE' and another labeled 'POP-UP STORE'. The board is part of a larger display, with other boards visible in the background. The image is overlaid with a teal tint.

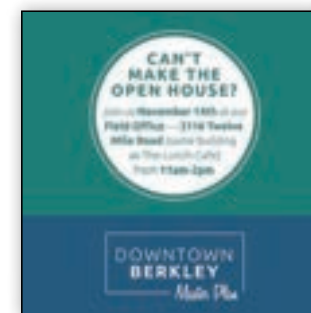
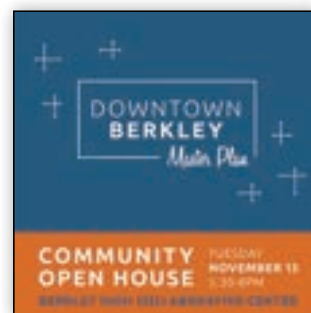
**The public visioning and outreach phase of the Downtown Berkley process included significant engagement of community residents, business owners, City and DDA staff, and elected officials.**

From the beginning, stakeholders were engaged in a dialogue on their community's Downtown—its key assets, areas for improvement, and what its future could be.

The process was tailored to encourage participation through a number of different avenues, both in-person and electronic formats. Engagement tools included a project website; social media posts; a community Pinterest board; online surveys; a community open house, held at the Berkley High School; and a Downtown field office that allowed stakeholders to view workshop materials and participate in exercises the day following the open house.



Project Website



Social Posts created for Downtown Berkeley's Facebook and Instagram



Community Open House and Field Office Posters



Community Open House Flyers posted around Downtown Berkeley



Project Info Cards listing Project Website

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In early October of 2018, the planning team spent two full days in Berkley meeting with a wide variety of Berkley stakeholders, including local elected officials, city council members and city staff, representatives from the regional organizations such as the Roads Commission of Oakland County and Main Street Oakland County, local civic institutions and employment centers, and Berkley business and property owners. Through these meetings, a number of key issues emerged regarding the history of Downtown Berkley's planning initiatives, key challenges and opportunities. The following section summarizes stakeholder feedback.

## DOWNTOWN REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Downtown developers, investors, and stakeholders commented that the downtown zoning and the development review process is lengthy and a deterrent to downtown investment. Current building codes are outdated and onerous, discouraging new businesses from moving to Downtown or existing businesses to expand.

The DDA noted that it is participating in the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities® program, which is designed to update development processes to be more predictable and efficient, while also encouraging flexibility. This process, along with the recent *Berkley Design Guidelines* document and ensuing Design Overlay District, will help to standardize the development review process. With those steps in place, stakeholders noted that better marketing of key sites and desired businesses is needed.

## A PLACE TO GATHER

There is consensus among community stakeholders in the need for a public space Downtown. However, plans to create such a place have fallen short in the past. While concepts for a plaza at Twelve Mile Road and Robina Avenue are still viewed fairly positively, stakeholders are interested in seeing more options—both for the design of the space and its location. While a Downtown public space is needed to activate the downtown and bring more vibrancy and investment, residents and volunteers need ideas for placemaking that can come to fruition quickly, to renew energy for this initiative and create more pockets of activity.

What brings people together in the absence of a community space Downtown is the events—which draw residents from nearby communities and are part of what makes living in Berkley great. While a greater frequency of events is desired, there is also volunteer burnout for managing these events. Stakeholders considered shifting the focus to design more “activated spaces” in place of additional events, which could be less cumbersome to administer, while still bringing people together.





## TRAFFIC & PARKING

Though walkability is a key asset in Downtown Berkley, traffic speeds and sidewalk conditions on both corridors continue to be an issue. Many intersections feel unsafe to cross and would benefit from better pedestrian amenities. While Michigan traffic laws make reducing the speed limit challenging, changes to street geometry can be used to achieve slower speeds. These changes have been incorporated into the Coolidge road diet, which is generally supported in Berkley due to the success of road diets in nearby Oakland County cities. Improvements to pedestrian safety in Downtown Berkley are necessary to create the foot traffic needed to support a vibrant downtown, as well as to ease the parking issues that ensue when residents don't feel safe walking to their destination.

Many stakeholders noted that free parking is important to Downtown Berkley and differentiates the Downtown from neighboring communities. Though perceptions of a parking issue vary, improved parking standards and requirements, as well as better signage and permitting in certain residential locations, are desired to address the issue.

## STREETSCAPE & FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Downtown Berkley has a number of storefronts and buildings in need of rehabilitation. The run-down appearance of these buildings deters retailers, impact property values, and create a sense of disinvestment in the downtown. The current facade improvement program should be more widely advertised to encourage additional participation in the program.

In addition to building and storefronts in need of repair, the streetscape environment throughout Downtown Berkley is inconsistent, often lacking any landscaping or pedestrian amenities. Potential improvements to the streetscape can attract business owners and investors, and create a sense of the identity of Berkley through lighting, signage, and street furnishings. Stakeholders noted the need to align these investments with needed infrastructure improvements, and to incorporate stormwater management strategies to address flooding issues that impact residents in Berkley as well as Huntington Woods and Oak Park.

## COMMUNICATION

Downtown business owners and Berkley residents expressed that better communication is needed from both the DDA and the City. Many business owners are not aware of Downtown events, and the calendar of events between the DDA and the City are not consistently coordinated. This lack of coordination and communication causes confusion for Berkley stakeholders who need to manage their own schedules accordingly, and who would like to leverage the opportunity presented by Downtown events. There is also a missed opportunity to better communicate the various roles and responsibilities of City entities and how they bring value to residents and business owners. Though a "Welcome Packet" for new residents is distributed by the Berkley Chamber of Commerce, stakeholders noted that it was in need of an update.

While conflicting opinions are natural for a community undergoing change and revitalization in its downtown district, this planning process was noted as an opportunity to bring people together on what they are for, instead of what they are against.



# OPEN HOUSE & SURVEY RESULTS

**Approximately 60 people participated in the first Community Open House, held during the evening of November 13, 2018 at the Berkley High School Collaborative Center.**

**This workshop introduced the planning process to the community and provided a series of interactive exercises to engage stakeholders on what they considered to be the biggest issues and opportunities within the Downtown area.**

The planning team also hosted a Community Field Office the day following the Open House to provide opportunity for people who were unable to attend the event to learn about the project and participate in Open House exercises.

Open House exercises included **Visual Preference Boards**, where participants were asked to rank imagery related to placemaking, streetscape, public space, and transportation elements so the planning team could get a sense of the community's preferences on improvements to Downtown's physical realm.

A **Big Map Exercise** layed out maps of Twelve Mile and Coolidge and asked participants to mark the locations of issues and opportunities using coded stickers and accompanying notes.

Attendees were also asked to “put your money where your mouth is” through an interactive **Priority Voting Exercise**. Each participant had a total of five coins, each counting as a vote for various downtown initiatives, ranging from urban design improvements to business retention to transportation enhancements.

Following the Open House and Field Office, all materials and surveys were posted on the project website, and an online survey was created for those who could not attend. Forty people completed the online survey, which was live for four weeks and advertised through social media and e-newsletters.





# STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Open House attendees and survey respondents were asked two open-ended questions about Downtown's strengths and weaknesses, respectively. Collective and universal themes emerged from the responses for each, which are highlighted in the graphics to the right.

Strengths of the Downtown include its variety of retail offerings, such as specialty shops and locally-owned businesses. In many responses, this was directly linked to the community's small town feel and quaint character.

Another Downtown strength expressed in a number of survey responses was walkability, especially along Twelve Mile and to and from nearby neighborhoods. Yet, a major weakness was identified as high traffic speeds, which make the pedestrian experience throughout Downtown feel unsafe.

Many respondents expressed the lack of business diversity Downtown as a major weakness—particularly that there is a high number of hair salons, pizza places, and fitness studios. Additionally, people would like to see a wider variety of restaurant options and rehabilitated Downtown buildings and storefronts.

## DOWNTOWN BERKLEY'S STRENGTHS

*"Easy to walk to with some unique shops and buildings"*



## DOWNTOWN BERKLEY'S WEAKNESSES





# VISUAL PREFERENCE

*The goal of the visual preference survey is to gauge the community's attitude towards Downtown's potential character through an interactive ranking exercise. Various types of improvements were featured on different boards and participants were given stickers to rank how much they liked or disliked each image.*

## PLACEMAKING

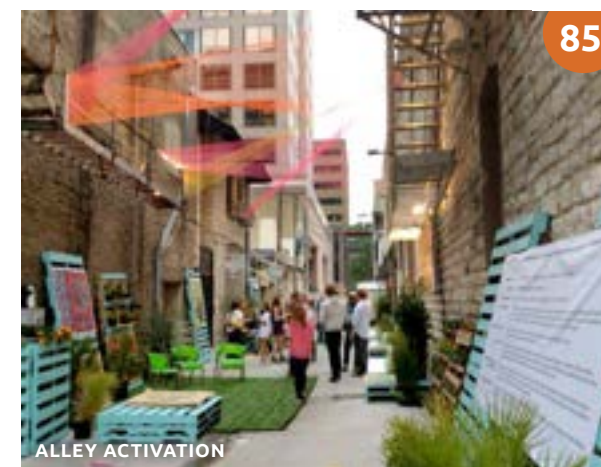
A variety of images representing temporary placemaking initiatives were featured on the Placemaking Board. This quicker and cheaper approach to placemaking involves making temporary and relatively inexpensive changes to a public space—activation of an alley through public art, mobile play structures, and quick-hit landscaping.

The highest ranked elements are featured to the right, with alley activation scoring the highest, followed by informal landscaping and alley murals. The preference for alley images indicate Berkley residents see potential in Downtown's alleys. While these are the highest ranking images from the board, all placemaking images ranked relatively high in comparison to other boards.

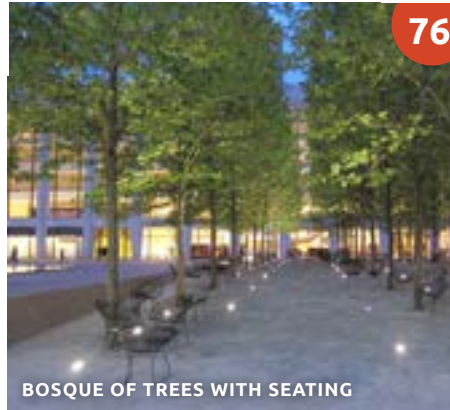
### Public Art



### Temporary Spaces & Elements



## Types of Public Spaces



## Elements of Public Spaces



## PUBLIC SPACES

The images on this board represent more permanent transformations to the public realm, which require larger investments and longer implementation timelines in comparison to temporary placemaking initiatives. Participants were asked to rank their preferences on types of public spaces, including new parks, plazas, and an outdoor market, as well as elements of public spaces, including a splash pad, a permanent stage for performances, and a shade structure.

Participants responded positively to images of a pocket park and urban plaza, as well as the use of string lights in future public spaces.



## STREETSCAPE

Streetscape improvements can include a number of changes to the physical road, traffic management, sidewalks, landscaping, materials, and street furniture. All of these create a more pleasing aesthetic, increased pedestrian safety, and make streets and sidewalks more appealing public spaces.

At this station, participants responded positively to pedestrian amenities—particularly updated street lights and streetscape furniture. Elements such as decorative paving, colorful bike racks, and dual trash/recycling receptacles also ranked highly.

### Lighting



### Furnishings



### Paving



### Bike Racks



## Stormwater Management



## Gateway Elements



## Landscape Treatments



Streetscape improvements can also serve as stormwater management initiatives. Of these elements, rain gardens and a permeable paver plaza were the highest-ranked in the visual preference survey.

Among the landscape treatment options provided, street trees ranked highest, followed by landscaped planter beds and seatwalls.



## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation initiatives that focused on pedestrian enhancements received the highest marks, such as crosswalks with a center pedestrian refuge and widened sidewalks. Among the bicycling/micromobility options presented, kid friendly cycling paths was the highest-ranked (see below right).

While many of the public transit improvements were not very highly rated, branded bus shelters with wayfinding signage were viewed positively.

### Enhanced Parking



70

### Public Transit



68

### Pedestrian Amenities



81



79

### Bicycling/Micromobility

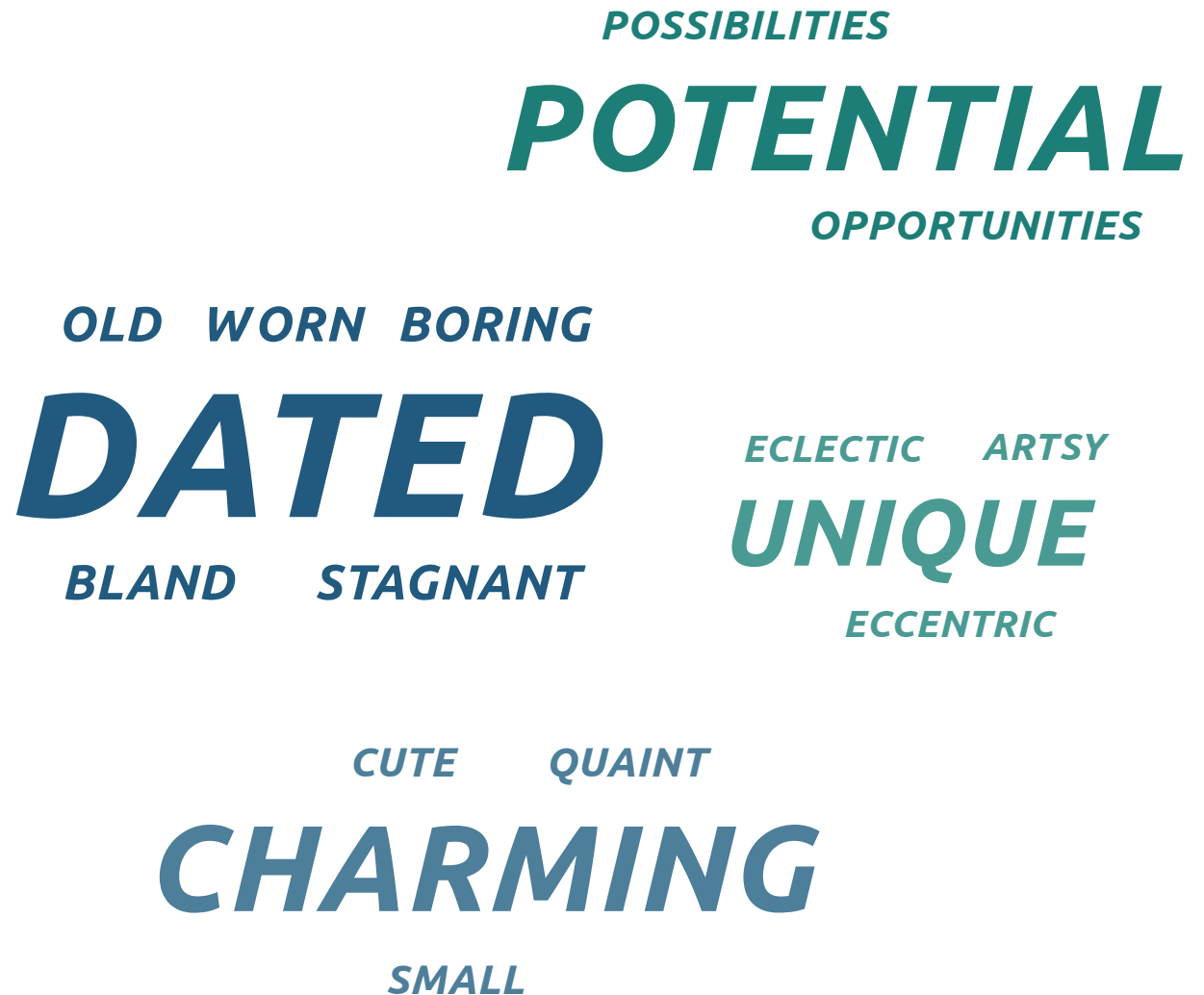


77

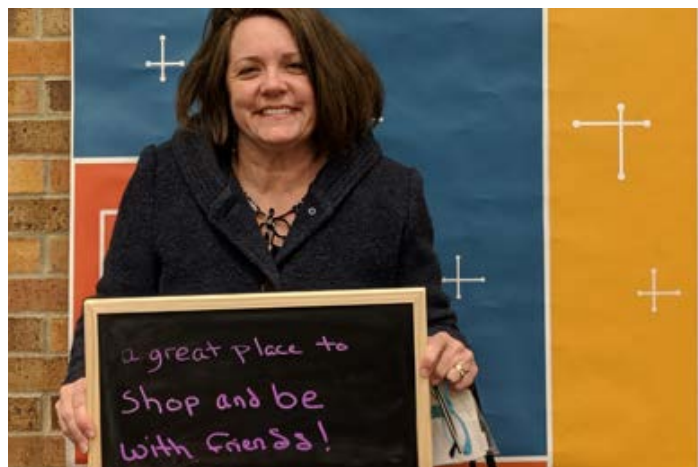
# DOWNTOWN BERKLEY IS...

When asked to describe Downtown Berkley in a few words, a mixed impression emerges. Some of the most frequently used words describe Downtown as “dated” (old, worn, boring, etc.), though they also largely see its potential and its charm.

When open house attendees were asked how they envision Downtown Berkley in the future, their responses were largely positive and hopeful.



*"Now and in the future, Downtown Berkley is progressive, welcoming and wonderful for both business owners and residents."*



*"Now and in the future, Downtown Berkley is a fun, friendly, and safe place for everyone."*

*"A future Downtown should have greater separation between 'shopping' locations and service locations. Make shopping easy and convenient to walk to."*

# BIG MAP EXERCISE

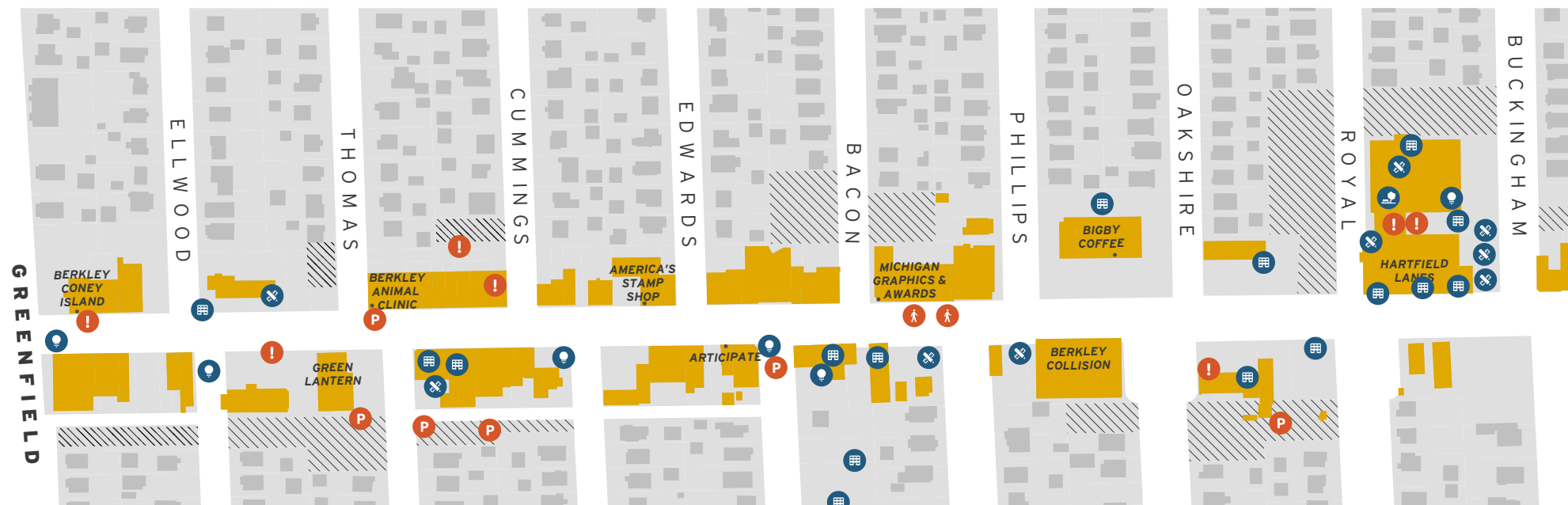
Attendees at the Community Open House and the Field Office were presented with large maps of Twelve Mile Road and Coolidge Highway in Downtown Berkley. Each person was given a set of numbered stickers, each with a corresponding comment card. The stickers were categorized into opportunities (design, public space, development, and general) and issues (parking, pedestrian, and general). The following summarizes the results, as presented in Figure 16, below, and Figure 17 on page 66.

## OPPORTUNITIES Design Opportunities



Locations for design opportunities centered around two main locations—Hartfield Lanes bowling alley at Twelve Mile and Buckingham, and at the intersection of Coolidge and Twelve Mile. Most comments mentioned more landscaping, public art, and decorative lighting as highly desirable. Specific ideas including converting some of the bowling alley's parking into a pop-up cinema, improving the gateway to the city at Coolidge and Eleven Mile, and adding a shade structure to the open space between Clark's ice cream and Odd Fellows antiques.

FIGURE 16: Big Map Results - Twelve Mile Road





## Public Space Opportunities

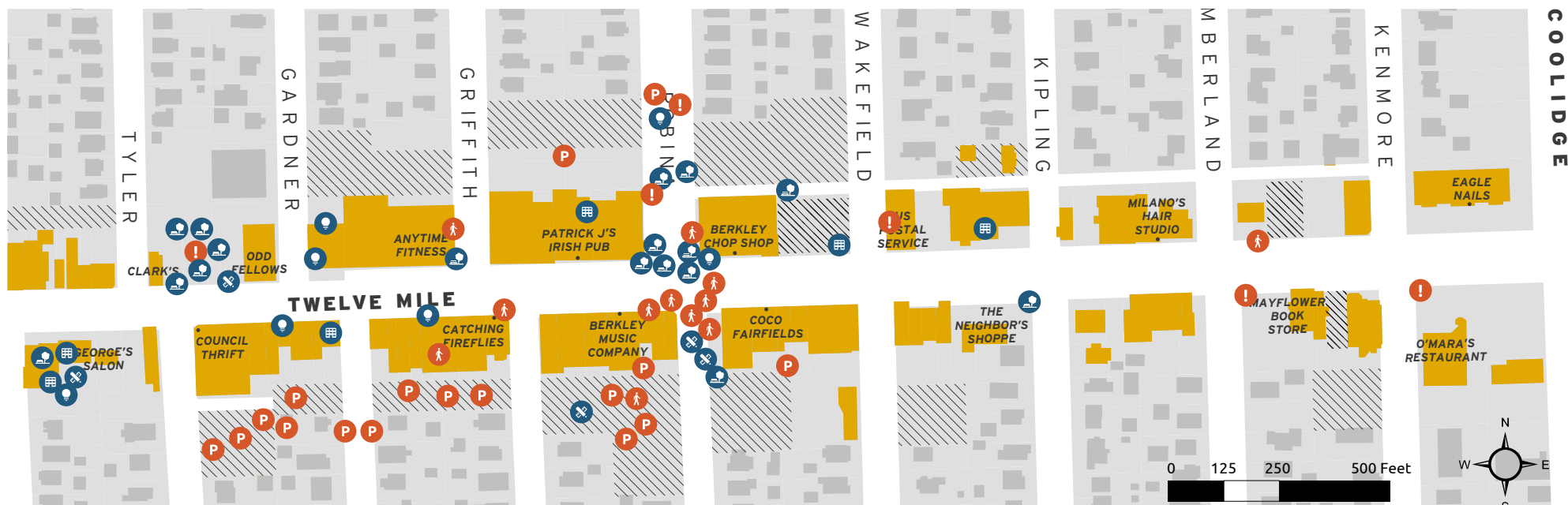


Though public space opportunities were identified around the Downtown, the three most common locations were between Clark's and Odd Fellows on Twelve Mile, at Robina and Twelve Mile, and near Berkley High School on Coolidge. Other potential locations include small green spaces at Twelve Mile and Kipling, at Coolidge and Earlmont, and as a part of a development at Our Lady of La Salette. Additional ideas included activating the High School parking on Coolidge by adding a green wall with seating, and programming art installations at Dorthea and Coolidge.

## Development Opportunities



Community members identified development opportunities throughout the Downtown—indicating a high level of support for both new mixed-use development and adaptive use projects. In addition to previously discussed development opportunities, such as City Hall and the La Salette property, sites such as Hartfield Lanes, parcels adjacent to Berkley Public Works, the site at Coolidge and Earlmont, and a number of outdated strip malls on Coolidge were identified.



## General Opportunities



The most common locations for general opportunity stickers occur on Coolidge, near the Berkley Community Garden and the Stantec office building, where comments suggested the installation of new murals. Other opportunity comments note good locations for restaurants, breweries, and coffee shops, as well as buildings that need improvements, such as the Council Thrift Building on Twelve Mile. The Berkley Theater building was also identified as an ideal location for small shows and events.

## ISSUES Parking Issues



The majority of identified parking issues occur in the lots on the south side of Twelve Mile between Griffith and Tyler. Comments for these locations indicate that they are full during prime hours, and that spots for particular businesses are not adequately utilized and should be shared. The lots on the south side of Twelve Mile at Thomas were also identified, as were some residential streets where overnight parking is an issue.

Fewer parking issues were identified on Coolidge, though comments note that more parking will be needed for Coolidge to grow. Parking near Republica restaurant was noted as an issue. The lot at Coolidge and Dorothea was identified as one that should be reconfigured to allow the area to be used as a public space.

FIGURE 17: Big Map Results - Coolidge Highway



## Pedestrian Issues



Pedestrian issues were identified throughout Downtown Berkley. Comments indicate the need for more places to cross Twelve Mile—particularly at Robina, where many suggested a new crosswalk. The parking lot south of Twelve Mile at Robina was also noted as a pedestrian hazard. On Coolidge, many mentioned the need for additional crosswalks to make the area safer for high school students. The number of curb cuts and uneven sidewalks on Coolidge were also noted as an issue.

## General Issues



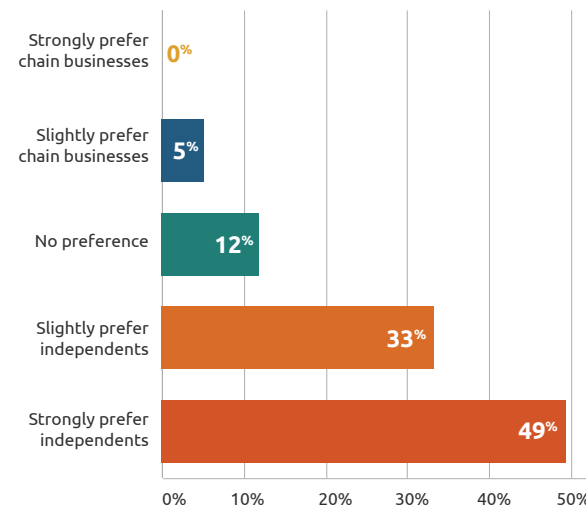
The locations and comments in the general issues category are generally well-represented in the other topics. These include the need for sidewalk improvements, unsafe crossings, unsightly buildings, and traffic speeds. Specific issues include the need to better educate drivers and pedestrians on how to use the Coolidge enhanced crosswalks, and the potential to improve the space between Clark's and Odd Fellows.



# BUSINESS SURVEY

*A series of survey questions asked respondents about their downtown experience—how often they visit Downtown, how chain businesses are viewed, and what businesses they would like to see Downtown.*

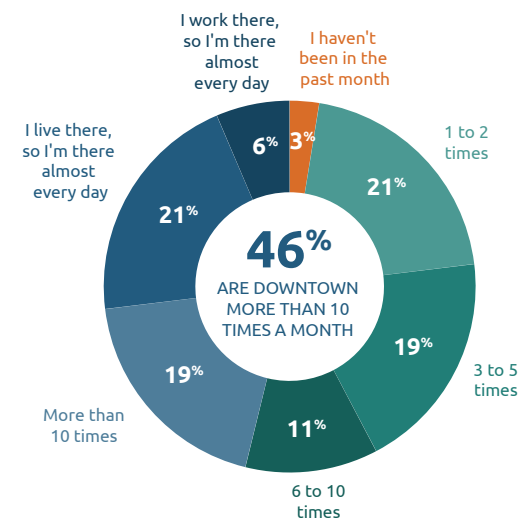
**FIGURE 18: Independent & Chain Business Preferences**



## BUSINESS PREFERENCES

Respondents overwhelmingly favor the independent-business character of Downtown Berkley, with 83 percent preferring independent businesses to chains.

**FIGURE 19: Frequency of Visits**



## FREQUENCY OF VISITS

Survey respondents visit Downtown often: 77 percent of people said they are in Downtown Berkley at least three times per month. Almost half, 46 percent are Downtown more than ten times a month. Of those, 27 percent live or work Downtown. Less than 3 percent said they rarely visit Downtown.



## TOP THREE BUSINESSES DESIRED IN BERKLEY:

- 1 *Restaurants*
- 2 *Coffee Shops*
- 3 *Grocery Store*

## DESIRED BUSINESSES

When asked what types of businesses respondents would like to see, three categories rose to the top. It is ironic that the most-frequently-mentioned category is the one where Downtown Berkley is already strong: restaurants.

Overwhelmingly, respondents want more restaurants. Almost 70 percent of survey respondents desired restaurants – particularly a greater variety of ethnic restaurants (e.g., Mexican food, sushi), or non-ethnic restaurants with a specialty or theme (e.g., steakhouse).

A microbrewery was specifically mentioned by 20 percent of respondents.

Coffee shops were the next most-frequently mentioned, with a strong preference for independent coffee shops. Coffee shops were mentioned in 36 percent of surveys.

The desire for a Downtown grocery store came up in 33 percent of surveys, with a range of preferences from a full-line grocery store, specialty markets (e.g., ethnic foods), or green grocer.

In addition to these three categories, respondents mentioned a range of desired independent or boutique retailers, including apparel, toys, books, and others.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Survey respondents were asked about the greatest challenges currently facing Downtown Berkley, as well as what opportunities Downtown Berkley should pursue over the next decade. Common responses regarding both challenges and opportunities are outlined below.

A handful of responses were commonly listed as both challenges and opportunities. For instance, competition from nearby communities was seen as a challenge, but the growth of those communities was seen as beneficial for the growth of Berkley.

The limited number of entertainment venues is a challenge for the Downtown, but also an opportunity to attract new businesses to fill that void. While the community lacks a public gathering space, it is also opportunity to design a space that could define Downtown Berkley.



# PRIORITY INITIATIVES

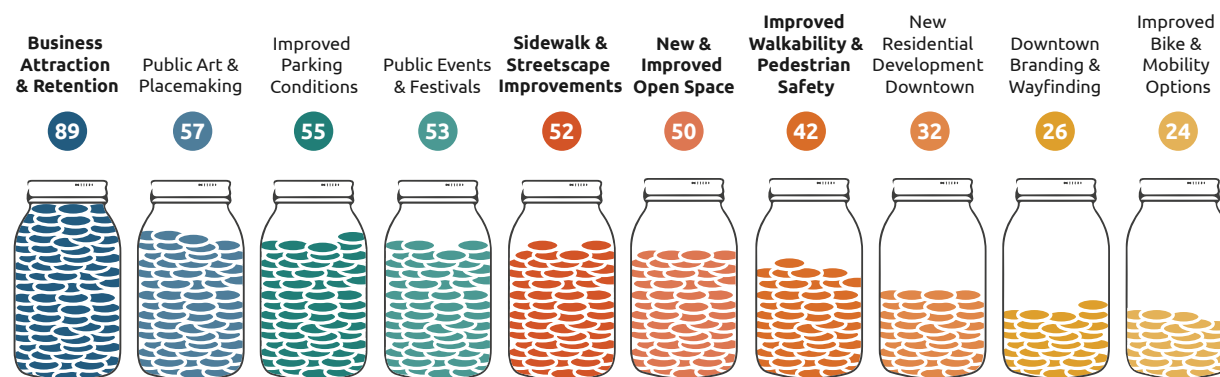
During the Community Open House, attendees were given five coins to distribute among a number of jars, each labeled with their own downtown initiative. A similar exercise was included on the online survey, where respondents were asked to rank the same downtown initiatives.

The results from the Open House coin exercise highlighted **Business Attraction and Retention**, **Public Art and Placemaking**, and **Improved Parking Conditions** as the highest priority initiatives.

Responses from the online survey are in agreement on the top priority of **Business Attraction and Retention**. From there, the results diverge, with the next highest priority items as **New and Improved Open Space**, and **Sidewalk and Streetscape Improvements**.

Though the top results from each exercise may be at odds with each other, it's important to note that aside from the Business Attraction and Retention initiative, the next six highest ranked initiatives in both exercises are all within a close range. Therefore, it may be more insightful to examine the three initiatives near the bottom of both exercises: New Residential Development Downtown, Downtown Branding and Wayfinding, and Improved Bike and Mobility Options.

## COIN EXERCISE RESULTS



## SURVEY PRIORITY RANKING

